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ANTHONY EDEN

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АНТОНИ ИДЕН

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From the Author.

Before devoting time to one theme or another, every author has to settle an important question to his own satisfaction: for what purpose should one take this theme, and for whom is it needed? This was so in my case also. A political biography of Anthony Eden attracted me, as an author, for a number of reasons.

Firstly, Eden played one of the most important roles in carrying out British foreign policy from the thirties to the fifties of the present century. These decades were filled with events such as the policy of "appeasement" of aggressors, the beginning of the Second World War, the activity of the anti-Hitler coalition, the development of the post-war contest between socialism and imperialism, et cetera. A study of Eden makes possible a better understanding of the course of these events. His life is to some degree a part of the diplomatic and political history of Britain.

Secondly, the history of international relations in those years has been and remains an object of sharp ideological conflict. The stream of research works, publicistic works and memoirs, devoted to the history of those years and published in the bourgeois world, has not yet run dry.

Eden himself published three large volumes of Memoirs, and numerous articles by way of vindicating his own role and British foreign policy. To answer this convincingly, it is essential to consider the operations of British diplomacy and the acts of Eden himself from the thirties to the fifties in the light of all that has been achieved by scientific historical research both in the Soviet Union and abroad.

Thirdly, in historical literature and in memoirs one finds it asserted that Eden should not be lumped together with other British supporters of "appeasement", because his views on foreign policy were, it is alleged, different from theirs; he is supposed to have held liberal views and acted as a protagonist of collective security. Along with this goes the

assertion that he was "favourably inclined" towards the Soviet Union. It therefore seems reasonable to take a look at the facts which show Eden's true position on these issues also.

Fourthly, the experience of Soviet historians and of their colleagues abroad shows that the reading public welcomes books in which the history of various countries and classes is illuminated via the lives of statesmen. They make historical narrative livelier, more particularised and easier to take in.

In view of these considerations, the author now offers for the reader's judgement and verdict the first—so far as he is aware—Marxist book on Anthony Eden.

Chapter I

THE BEGINNING OF THE ROAD

It is considered to be universally recognised that Anthony Eden was fortune's favourite. Luck was with him for practically the whole of a long life. Eden was born into an aristocratic family that had important connections in British ruling circles. Nature endowed him with faultless good looks, and with mental abilities which may not have been truly outstanding but were quite sufficient to enable him to win success in the spheres of activity he chose to make his own.

Anthony Eden was born on June 12, 1897, at the family seat—Windlestone Hall, in one of the northern counties of England, Durham. The family chronicles show that Edens had lived in that area since the late 14th century. His earliest known ancestor died in 1413. That ancestor owned a respectable piece of land, which through purchase and advantageous marriages grew, in the course of several generations, to be a major landed estate. During the dark and turbulent Middle Ages the Edens constantly had to defend their possessions, sword in hand, from greedy and violent neighbours and from the warlike Scots, who from time to time descended from the Cheviots and the Highlands.

During the English bourgeois revolution of the 17th century the Edens were faithful servants of the Stuarts. Robert Eden was a colonel in Charles I's army at the age of 27, and at his commission raised an infantry regiment of a thousand men. But Charles was defeated, and under Cromwell the young colonel lost his lands. But Robert Eden's services to the Stuart dynasty were rewarded after the Restoration, when his former estates were returned to him, and his eldest son received the title of baron from Charles II.

The line of barons Eden soon extended their activities beyond the northern counties and began to play a prominent part on the English political scene centrally. The children of the third baron were particularly successful. One of his

sons represented Durham in three Parliaments running. Another became Governor of Maryland, a British colony in North America. While holding this post he, too, received the title of baron, and by virtue of his marriage to Caroline Calvert inherited the title of a Count of the Holy Roman Empire (later on all these three titles—the original Eden barony, that of Sir Eden of Maryland, and Count of the Holy Roman Empire—came to be vested in one single member of the family, owing to various twists of genealogy). Yet another son had a successful career in diplomacy, representing his country at various European courts, and becoming Lord Henley...

The most striking personality out of all the Edens was Lord Auckland. He studied law, and economics, which in those days was not held to be anything of interest to an aristocrat, and he founded the National Bank of Ireland. This energetic Lord was close to Pitt, then Prime Minister, who sent him to France to conclude a commercial treaty, and later despatched him on a special mission to Madrid. After Spain, America; and after that Lord Auckland was his country's Ambassador to Holland. Finally he became a member of the government, as Chancellor of the Exchequer. The friendship between Pitt and Lord Auckland soon ran into trouble, for reasons far removed from politics. The young Prime Minister fell in love with Auckland's daughter, but she married someone else. The alienation from one another of the two statesmen, formerly so close, brought Auckland into the camp of Pitt's opponents. And under them too he gained an important post, that of President of the Board of Trade.

His children also made careers for themselves. One of them, Morton, became famous as a diplomat, representing Britain in Denmark, Germany, Austria-Hungary and Spain. His brother John became a bishop. Another son, George, who supported his father when he broke with Pitt and the Tories, became eventually a leading figure in the opposition party, the Whigs, and in governments formed by them he was in turn President of the Board of Trade, First Lord of the Admiralty, and Governor-General of India, and was given an earldom for his services.

Throughout the 19th century, Britain's "Golden Age", the now extensive Eden family played an important part in public life. Its members were Ministers of the Crown, Ambassadors to the major European powers, high-ranking colonial officials, bishops of the established church. The family had

long been accustomed to positions of power, and like other aristocratic families looked on running the country's affairs as their prerogative.

In the 19th century the fifth baron built an impressive house, capacious and beautiful by the standards of the day, which became the hereditary home of the Eden family. The house was surrounded by an extensive park and stood on the side of a hill, facing east, and thus enjoying ample fresh air from the North Sea. It was in this house, named Windlestone Hall, that half a century later Anthony Eden was born. His father was Sir William Eden, seventh baron and inheritor of the estates, who had married Sybil Grey.

This marriage enlarged the family's aristocratic connections very significantly. The Greys too were and had been holders of high office. Sybil's great-grandfather was the first Earl Grey, brother of the Prime Minister who had got the Reform Bill made law in 1832. In later years, just before the First World War, a Grey was Foreign Secretary. Lady Eden's father was Governor of Bengal and after that of Jamaica.

Sir William Eden was the very antithesis of his energetic forebears. He was not interested in politics, lived on his estate the whole time, running it, and shooting, and was said to have painted quite good watercolours. Anthony's father was known to be given to furious outbursts and to be utterly intolerant with other people, including the members of his own family. A newspaper rustling as someone read it in the same room as the head of the family could send him into a fury. He could not stand merry children's voices, children playing. Why was he like this? There may possibly have been some serious mental abnormality. But another explanation is possible. Irritability over trifles is often the result of general dissatisfaction with life. Significantly, one of Anthony Eden's biographers, William Rees-Mogg, describes his father as a man "always shaking his fist at God for not creating a better world".

Anthony's mother was considered one of the most beautiful women in England in her time. Contemporaries recalled that when Lady Eden appeared at balls, many of those present would climb up on the gilt chairs to get a better view of her. She liked travelling and had an agreeable temper, as noted by those who knew her. The mother was naturally closer to the children than the father, but did not have very much to do with them. In those days the children of aristo-

cratic families were brought up by governesses, and their parents rarely saw them.

Anthony was the fourth child in the family. His sister Marjorie was born ten years before him and his brothers John and Timothy eight and four years earlier respectively. The youngest, Nicholas, was born three years after Anthony. The children grew up surrounded by every luxury. The family was at that time on the crest of the wave of success that had attended it for many decades.

Yet the childhood of the young Edens was not particularly happy. Their father was in a state of constant warfare with himself and with his family, which he terrorised. Sir William's fits of rage and his abrupt manner of speaking were profoundly traumatic for his children. Overcome with fright, they adopted all possible means of avoiding meetings with their father, which were rare enough occurrences anyway. Sir William, as his son Timothy later wrote in a book about him, "could not endure, for long, even the presence of his own children... He has always fled from them in the holidays."

Anthony seems to have had a better relationship with his father than did the other children. The position of third son was a sort of protection to him, for Sir William concentrated his attention on the elder sons. Furthermore, Anthony's interests and his father's to some extent coincided: both liked painting, shooting and gardening. Watercolours painted by the father hung in his son's room all his life. Anthony always spoke well of his father. From him he inherited not only the love of painting, but the abrupt temperament as well. It was a known fact that the younger Eden too reacted to stress and fatigue with explosions of irritation. But he had more self-control. His relations with his father had a considerable psychological effect upon Anthony Eden. He acquired the habit, which remained with him for ever, of reckoning with and accommodating himself to another person's strong will, which caused him in later life to seek not direct confrontation and trial of strength, but compromise. Faced with strength, he would retreat.

These qualities began to develop even in Anthony's earliest years. His mother later recalled: "He was always the quiet one. They say that famous men are often the most mischievous as boys, but Anthony was never that. He never gave me a moment's trouble."

The mother was satisfied with her son. But the son was

very probably not so satisfied with her attitude to him. One of Eden's biographers, Randolph Churchill, writes that his mother "never extended the same love and sympathy towards Anthony as she did towards her first-born John, and Nicholas, the Benjamin of the family. Friends of the family are convinced that Anthony, though he concealed it, felt injured in his self-esteem, and that this injury was the motive force of the quest for self-sufficiency which has dominated his whole life, both private and public..."

In childhood Anthony was in the constant care of Miss Broomhead, his governess, to whom he remained lastingly attached. She taught her charge German and French, and did it with great skill. She gave him a love for languages which stood him in good stead in later life.

When Anthony was eight years old he was sent to a preparatory school in South Kensington, and a year later to Sandroyd, a private school in Surrey. This was an orthodox establishment preparing pupils for entrance to the famous Eton. Sandroyd was a school attended by children from the highest English social circles and by the heirs of some European ruling houses. The future King Peter of Yugoslavia went there, for instance, some years later, and Winston Churchill's son Randolph, and other sprigs from families of similar standing.

Anthony spent four years at Sandroyd. He did not stand out in any way among his peers. True, he won prizes for French and for history, but was clearly not too happy with mathematics. He had to stay down for a year for that subject. This blow to the vanity had its effect. Anthony set about working hard, and soon caught up in maths. His general progress was fairly good, but not more than that.

Before he left Sandroyd, his English master reported: "He is rather young for his years still and wants more determination to go his own way." Has a "soft heart... Personally I am more concerned to see him more vigorous out of doors." Such was Anthony before entering Eton, the school which all his forebears for two hundred years had attended.

Eton was England's main source of supply of statesmen and top administrators. It opened up the road for its pupils to the ancient universities of Oxford and Cambridge. Eton still plays the same part today, though to a more limited extent.

Anthony Eden at Eton was a model pupil, a well-behaved pupil, but not a striking pupil. His peers remembered him as

"always very well dressed and good-looking"; one of his masters, W. Hope-Jones, admitted later that he always thought of Eden during his schooldays as having "better manners than brains".

The wishy-washy impression left by Eden at Eton was due not only to his abilities being far from brilliant, but also to the stiff and careful restraint he showed in his behaviour. He had evolved this manner while still at home, when he had always to be careful of his father's temper.

The young Eden realised that his performance at school was pretty mediocre. It upset him, he was unhappy about it and even wrote of it to his father. He got the following lines in reply: "Be not downcast, oh my soul! Hope thou in the Lord! You are not a waster, thank God. You may yet be as great and good a man as "Your affectionate Daddie."

On June 4 old pupils of Eton go back to meet together within the school walls. But Eden never took part in these gatherings. He had left no mark, good or bad, at Eton, and Eton in turn had never touched his heart.

Straight from school, as soon as he reached the age of eighteen, Eden volunteered for front-line service in the First World War. A few weeks before he signed up, Sir William had died. His eldest brother John had been killed in action in France in 1914. Soon afterwards Nicholas, who was in the Navy, and had been much closer to Anthony than the other brothers had, was also killed. The war took its toll from the Eden family. The members of that family volunteered for the armed forces. In the first years of the war there was no conscription in Britain. But it was the tradition that in time of war the aristocracy should pay their country back for their privileged position, in service.

Anthony's military service began in September 1915, in an infantry battalion recruited from the country population of Anthony's native county, Durham. The army command held that men from the same area would fight better together. The men of the battalion were physically strong, well-disciplined soldiers, reasonably well educated, and their commander was a well-to-do local landowner, Lord of Feversham. First on his estate, and then at Aldershot, the biggest military training centre in England, the recruits underwent intensive preparation.

In May 1916 Eden's battalion was sent to France, and on the 15th of September it took part in an offensive and suffered heavy losses. The officers tried to withdraw the remnants of

the battalion from the front-line, but in doing so brought it under heavy German machine-gun fire. The battalion commander and many officers and men were killed; only a few were unhurt. Such was Eden's baptism of fire.

The young lieutenant lacked confidence to begin with. Shy by nature, he looked younger than his years and was embarrassed when he had to give orders. But war steeled his character, and Anthony found maturity.

Having attained manhood at the front, Eden proved himself a calm, efficient and energetic officer. His relations with the men were good, and with his fellow-officers they were even better. At the age of nineteen Eden was appointed Adjutant to the battalion—the youngest Adjutant in the British Army. In 1917, while leading a trench raid, he distinguished himself by rescuing his sergeant, who had been badly wounded, and bringing him safely back through the wire, for which he was awarded the Military Cross. Subsequently he was promoted to the rank of Captain and transferred to Brigade Headquarters, and ended the war on the staff of the First Army. But demobilisation was slow. For another year Eden stayed in the army, taking stock of the war materials that had survived the military operations, and only in 1919 was he able to exchange his captain's uniform for civilian dress.

Army service had a beneficial effect on the formation of Eden's personality. Battle steeled his character, developed his confidence in his own powers and abilities, bringing out skills of organisation and leadership that few had previously suspected.

After demobilisation—Eden was then 22—the question arose of what he was to do. His elder brother Timothy had now inherited the title and all his father's estates and was the eighth Baron Eden.

Anthony was not attracted to the army, he dreamed of a career in diplomacy. His mother advised him to go to Oxford, as the Edens had done time out of mind. Hard though it was to go back to school, a proper university training was essential if he was to enter on a diplomatic career.

Eden went to Oxford, to Christ Church, the college traditionally attended by his family, but his choice was unusual—Oriental languages. He studied Persian and Arabic. A knowledge of the East promised good opportunities for advancement in the diplomatic service.

Much can change in a man under the influence of environ-

ment, conditions and circumstances, but as a rule the foundation remains the same. The war had changed his character considerably, but in his years at the University, as at Eton, Anthony remained reserved and apart; he had few friends.

At the University, the Oxford Union—a student society—is a very popular institution. It is common for many who dream of a political career, or who are just interested in politics, to try out their strength there and develop their powers of oratory. Prominent politicians have come up through the Union. But Eden held back from it. Nor did he take part in the activities of the other student societies then functioning in Oxford.

His interests lay elsewhere. On November 20, 1920, certain students received a short typewritten letter, signed by Eden and two of his friends, announcing the founding of "the Uffizi Society"—named after the famous picture gallery in Florence—and inviting them to join. The letter explained that the intention was to invite prominent painters and art critics to speak to the Society's members. The Uffizi Society, with a membership of 35, was a body which only the "chosen few" were invited to join. At its meetings papers were usually read on the work of painters or sculptors. Anthony contributed one on the post-Impressionist Paul Cézanne. His biographers are unanimous in remarking on the depth and originality of his treatment of Cézanne's work, showing a refined artistic sensibility on his part.

Eden was also an active member of the dramatic society, carrying on his childhood interest in amateur theatricals, which used to take place in the holidays at Windlestone and at Lord of Feversham's neighbouring seat.

More serious activities for Eden were those at the University's Asiatic Society. Anthony's friends recall his participation in discussions of Middle Eastern and Far Eastern problems. From his mother Eden inherited a love of travel. During his time at Oxford he and three friends made an extended trip through Europe and Asia Minor.

While at Oxford Eden deliberately developed his love for systematic, hard study. He regularly worked not less than eight hours a day—a great deal more than other students devoted to their studies. He worked hard during vacations too. All this produced results: in 1922 Eden graduated with first-class honours.

When he had entered the University Eden had been aiming

at a diplomatic career, but by the time he completed his course his plans changed: he decided to "enter politics". This too was in the family tradition. His forebears had included eminent parliamentarians, Ministers and even Prime Ministers. The party he would espouse was not in question. An aristocrat by birth, bound to the Conservatives by strong links of class and ideology, and coming from a family ruled by Conservative traditions, he always considered that to promote the aims of the Conservative Party was the work to which his life should be devoted.

Objective circumstances made it easier for Eden to achieve his purpose. After the war the ranks of those who might be considered rivals in a political career were very thin. Who knows, perhaps this was the circumstance which made Eden give up the idea of quiet diplomatic service and choose the less secure but more tempting political field.

At that time the country was in ferment. The war had speeded up the processes taking place in economic, political and ideological life. In Russia there had taken place a socialist revolution. The wave of revolution had surged as far as Central Europe. The breath of revolution was felt in Britain too. The country's ruling circles were feverishly trying to take in the new conditions, to understand where the world was heading, and to find reliable ways of retaining their own privileged position under the new order of things.

The British bourgeoisie, greatly experienced and far-sighted, had realised that after the war class struggle would flare up with fresh strength. So measures had been taken in advance to damp down future action by the working people. The Cabinet was headed at the time by Lloyd George, a Liberal. A "man from the people", a clever and skilful politician, he served the ruling classes more wisely and effectively than their direct representatives could have done. His government employed the old, traditional English method—they tried to buy off the working class. Considerable economic concessions—true, they were only short-lived—were made to the working people. At the beginning of 1918 an electoral reform was carried through which increased the number of voters from 8 to 21 million. That meant that the broad masses of working people now had the right to elect Members of Parliament. In the same year the educational system was reformed in such a way as to make it easier for the children of workers to get an education.

Immediately after the Armistice was concluded on November 11, 1918, practically all the trades unions in Britain put forward their demands. The demands were, by and large, for a shorter working day, increased wages, and the restoration of the trade union rights curtailed during the war. Refusal to meet these demands meant strikes. The government's position was complicated by outbreaks of mutiny in the armed forces, going as far as the setting up of Soviets. The government had wished to retain a mass army to counter revolution outside, especially in Soviet Russia, and the workers' movement within the country, but found themselves obliged to demobilise it hastily.

With the mass workers' movement on the upsurge, and under the influence of the victorious October Revolution in Russia, revolutionary elements within Britain were activated. The Communist Party of Great Britain was formed in 1920.

Towards the end of 1920 the government and the entrepreneurs were gradually going over to the offensive. In October the government got a bill through Parliament giving the government special powers to counter working-class action. This was an open departure from the boasted "British democracy", from the bourgeois-democratic freedoms that had been the country's pride. In the spring of 1921, when conflict in the coal industry came to a head again, the leaders of the rail and other transport unions betrayed the miners, refusing them the support they had promised. This enabled the government and the mine-owners to defeat the miners. After the miners other sections of the working class also suffered defeat. The bourgeoisie was back on top, but only for the time being. The near future was pregnant with even more massive class struggles.

War, and revolution in Russia, had stimulated the national liberation movement in Britain's colonial empire. The time when the sun would finally set on British colonial rule was still a long way off, but grim warnings made themselves increasingly felt.

The oldest colony of all, and the nearest to London—Ireland—rose in the spring of 1916. The British Government gave the Irish a "Bloody Sunday", and suppressed the rising savagely. After the end of the World War the freedom-loving Irish proclaimed their country a republic, and began to set up new organs of power. The British responded with force. Military operations went on for three years. British regular

troops and auxiliary units committed the vilest atrocities in the attempt to crush Irish resistance.

Yet Britain, a great imperialist power, with a population ten times larger than that of Ireland (and as regards material resources the discrepancy was even greater), was unable to break the Irish people's fight for freedom. In December 1921 an agreement was signed by which Britain recognised the existence of an Irish state.

London watched in alarm the growing signs of discontent in India—the greatest pearl in the British Imperial crown. And in Egypt, a British protectorate, a mighty popular uprising against British rule broke out in 1919. It was suppressed by force, but two years later the Egyptians rose in revolt again. In 1922 Britain was obliged to give up its protectorate over Egypt. The movement for national liberation was developing and deepening throughout the British Empire, eating busily away at British influence in the post-war world.

The balance of forces in the imperialist world which prevailed in late 1918 and early 1919 had been formally recognised at the Paris Peace Conference. At the start of the conference Britain had already achieved many of her war aims. Germany's economic might, her power to compete in world markets, had been significantly reduced, and the threat of the German Navy eliminated. German colonial possessions had been occupied by British or Allied forces. Britain occupied Turkish territories which were important both strategically and as sources of raw materials. Britain's main task at the Paris Conference was therefore to retain, and get sanction in the peace treaty for such retention, all that had been seized and won by force of arms, against any pretensions on the part of her war-time allies. In many respects Britain achieved this.

The principal treaty produced by the Paris Conference—the Treaty of Versailles—also enshrined the Covenant of the League of Nations; this was an integral part of the Treaty. Conflict was acute around the question of what this international organisation, the League of Nations, should be. The result was a compromise, basically not far removed from the British conception. A League was created which did not have at its disposal the necessary real rights and resources to enable it to keep up the international peace. The leading part in this organisation was played by Britain and France. And inasmuch as the political clash between Britain and France over leadership in the affairs of post-war

Europe had by the mid-1920s been resolved in favour of Britain, Britain's voice in the League of Nations too counted for more than that of France.

The situation was rather different as regards Soviet Russia. Britain had adopted a sharply hostile attitude. Along with France, Japan, the United States and a number of other countries, Britain organised armed intervention against Soviet Russia. In grim struggle the workers and peasants of Russia crushed the enemies from without and those within the country. In doing so they got support from the working people of Britain and of other countries. In Britain the movement in support of the October Revolution became known as the Hands Off Russia movement.

The ruling circles of Britain were obliged to go so far as to sign, on March 16, 1921, a trade agreement with Soviet Russia which meant *de facto* recognition by Britain of the Soviet Government. This was a major success for Soviet foreign policy, providing a break in the anti-Soviet front of imperialism.

The failure of British policy in the fight against socialist revolution in Russia was not the only reverse suffered by Britain in the international field. In the early post-war years serious debacles in the Middle East also attended her. Britain attempted to maintain her sway over Afghanistan by military means, but without success. The treaty signed with Afghanistan in August 1919 embodied renouncement by Britain of her control over that country's internal and external policies. The same end awaited British attempts to force upon Iran a treaty which would have made it a British protectorate. The use of troops, bribery and provocation all failed of their ends. The establishment of British control over Iran did not come to pass.

Events in Turkey took a turn which caused complications for Britain. Turkey had been defeated in the war, and in August 1920 the victor nations forced upon it the Treaty of Sèvres, which dismembered the country and made it wholly dependent upon the imperialists of Britain, France and Italy. But this was to prove an illusory success. The rise of the Turkish movement for national liberation swept aside the Treaty of Sèvres. The British Government, using as a cat's paw Greece, which was dependent on Britain, started a war against the Turkish people, and suffered a resounding defeat. Eventually Britain kept, in one form or another, a number of territories in the Middle East which had previ-

ously belonged to Turkey, but she did not succeed in carrying through all the plans as regards Turkey.

Radical changes in Britain's economic position and in the balance of class forces within the country and outside it, an international scene of greatly increased complexity, led to major changes in the political system through which the British bourgeoisie governed the country. During the World War Britain found herself in such a difficult position that consolidation of all the forces available to the ruling classes was called for. This took the form of a coalition government, including representatives of both the Conservative and the Liberal parties. Labour representatives were also brought into the coalition. The latter lasted until late 1922.

The Conservatives and the Liberals represented all levels of the bourgeoisie and of the aristocracy, the two having become more and more intertwined. For many decades these two parties ruled the country, taking it in turn to form governments according to the results of the elections. This disposition of political forces came into being in the 19th century and reflected Britain's state of affairs within the country and in the world at large. But by the early 20th century conditions had changed, and the state of the parties with them. The Liberals expressed the interests of the commercial and industrial bourgeoisie, and had considerable influence among the petty bourgeoisie and a part of the working class. The Conservatives were the party of monopoly capital and the most reactionary political force in the country. The shift towards reaction among the British bourgeoisie prior to and during the war, and the sharpening of class contradictions, led to a growth in Conservative influence and a weakening of the position of the Liberals. At the same time, as a result of increased political consciousness among the working class, disenchantment with the activities of the Liberals and a greater desire to have its own political party grew among its ranks. Such a party came into being under the name of the Labour Party.

The Labour Party is not a revolutionary party. It is reformist, it never set itself the task—nor does it today—to carry through a socialist revolution and replace the bourgeois order by socialism.

The leading part in the Labour Party was from the start taken by right-wing elements, which accepted the rules of the game laid down for them. When leaders of the Labour Party were admitted to office in 1924 they proved their

reliability in practice, and in the British two-party system Labour took over the place of the Liberals, who in consequence of the polarisation of forces in the class struggle finally faded away into the status of a third party. Gradually the Labour Party became part of the political system of the British bourgeois state.

From time immemorial the ruling circles of Britain have paid great attention to hoodwinking the oppressed classes. Hypocrisy and the striking of righteous attitudes have become an indispensable element in British political life.

In the period we are dealing with, the twenties of the 20th century, these features of British political life were especially noticeable. The hypocrisy and the righteous attitude are there in the utterances of many statesmen and politicians, and this is what makes it so difficult to establish, from sources of the period, the true motives of the actions of government, parties and individuals.

By late 1922 the ruling circles of Britain had reached the conviction, undoubtedly mistaken, that the worst was past or them, both at home and abroad, and that there was therefore no point in preserving coalition any longer. In October 1922 the Conservatives took the decision to abandon cooperation with the Liberals. The result of this decision was the formation of a one-party Conservative Government, and the announcement of a General Election. This was the situation of which Anthony Eden took advantage to launch his political career.

His first efforts were unsuccessful (the same is true for many beginners in political life in Britain). Immediately after graduating from Oxford Anthony made use of the family connections to get himself accepted as a parliamentary candidate by the local Conservative organisation in his native Durham, for the constituency of Spennymoor. It was hardly a hopeful prospect. There were three candidates contesting the seat—Conservative, Liberal and Labour. Since the vast majority of the voters were miners from the local pits, they naturally gave their votes to the Labour candidate. Eden came second, with 7,576 votes, and the Liberal took third place.

For a twenty-five-year-old Conservative making his debut in a working-class constituency, it was by no means such a bad result. Eden had got a respectable number of votes and saved his deposit.

His defeat was neither crushing nor shameful. Spennymoor preferred Labour candidates to Conservative in other years

beside 1922; for decades, right up to the end of Eden's political career, no Conservative was ever successful there.

Eden and his patrons at once set about looking for a constituency with more promise. Soon chance took a hand in helping them to find one. The Conservative member for Warwick and Leamington was raised to the Lords, and thereby his seat in the Commons became vacant. A by-election was fixed.

The local organisation of the Conservative Party had to settle the question of who was to be their replacement candidate. There was no lack of competition for the place. On October 18, 1923, the local Conservative executive invited Anthony Eden to appear before a meeting in Leamington in connection with his possible candidature. The young man could as yet point to no services performed for the Conservatives. True, he had carried through a pretty fair election campaign under difficult conditions the previous year, but he had not been successful. His only advantages were good birth and an excellent personal appearance: a tall and elegant figure, regular features, fine eyes under thick brows, a noble forehead and a thick head of hair. Eden always knew how to dress well, in good taste. It used to be said that no one in England could tie a tie as beautifully as Anthony. His manner was one of smooth calm. This is something always held to be important.

At the Conservative executive meeting someone ventured the remark that "Eden was still very young". Eden undertook to mend this worrying fault in the course of time, and modestly admitted (modesty always goes down well with any audience) that unfortunately he had not as yet that advantage brought by long years of work—political experience. He promised to make up for this by boundless enthusiasm and loyalty to the Conservative cause.

The 1923 election campaign in Eden's constituency was a lengthy one. Polling day in the by-election had not yet arrived when a General Election was announced. This was owing to grave political events with which Eden had nothing to do.

For many decades Britain's economic policy had been one of *laissez-faire*, that is, freedom of trade and non-interference by government with the play of economic forces. During the period of British economic superiority this principle worked well. But Britain's competitors did not adhere to it. They engaged in fierce competition for external markets, while

protecting their internal markets by massive tariff barriers. Arguments went on for long years in Britain regarding the need to abandon free trade and go over to protection. Finally, in 1923 the then young Conservative Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin decided that the time had come for a change of economic policy. Baldwin judged it fitting to "go to the country" on the question of introducing protection, and dissolved Parliament—in which the Conservatives had a majority—declaring a General Election.

In this election Eden was lucky. Two circumstances boosted his popularity: his own marriage, and the fact that one of his opponents at the polls was an eccentric female relative of his.

Anthony's chosen bride was Beatrice Beckett, daughter of a banker. The wedding took place on November 5, 1923, at the height of the election campaign, at the fashionable Church of St. Margaret's, Westminster. The young couple spent their honeymoon in Sussex, and it set a record for brevity—two days only. Immediately afterwards Anthony plunged back into the election campaign. This marriage of a young candidate for Parliament, combined with his very imposing good looks, enlisted the sympathy of many electors, particularly the women.

Eden's opponent on behalf of the Labour Party was the Countess of Warwick. A countess as representative of the British workers' party looked very unusual in those days. What was this—an aristocratic lady's whim, or an expression of a real interest in social problems on her part? It is hard to say. The piquancy of the situation was heightened by the fact that Anthony was related, twice over, to the "left-wing" countess. She was mother-in-law to his sister, who had married Lord Brooke, heir to the earldom of Warwick; and Eden's wife Beatrice was also related to the countess. So the Parliamentary election looked rather like a family affair of the Edens.

This election brought him victory. He got 16,337 votes, the Liberal 11,134, and the Labour countess 4,015. Eden's triumph looked especially impressive since in the country as a whole the Conservatives had been defeated. So at twenty-six years of age Anthony Eden entered Parliament, representing Warwick and Leamington. His position in this constituency became so well established that he represented it in Parliament for an unbroken 33 years.

The 1923 elections showed that the voters did not approve

the Conservative leader Stanley Baldwin's proposal to bring in protection: fears that it would lead to a rise in food prices played their part. The government was obliged to resign. The question of who was to succeed Baldwin was a vexed one. Even after defeat at the polls the Conservatives still had more MPs than any other party, but as a defeated party they could not form a government. The party nearest to them in numbers of seats gained was the Labour Party with 191. The Liberals had won only 159 seats. Traditionally, in such a situation, the party with the second greatest number of seats forms the government. This time the Labour Party was in this position. In ruling circles there was no certainty as to how the Labour leaders would behave when in power. Might they not start introducing a truly socialist programme, under pressure from their rank and file if not from their own convictions? In the end it was decided that the experiment should be tried, and Labour given the chance to form a government; if they did not behave themselves "sensibly", they could always be got rid of by a simple vote in Parliament, for Conservatives and Liberals together had a majority over Labour.

Such was the situation when Anthony Eden first entered under the Gothic arches of the House of Commons in Westminster. This was the old building of Parliament, as it existed up to its destruction by Nazi bombs in 1942.

The formation of the first Labour Government in British history was entrusted to Ramsay MacDonald, the party's leader. Born into the family of a Scottish schoolteacher, MacDonald had left Scotland in his youth and migrated to London, where he joined the Labour movement, or as they like to say in Britain, "the Socialist" movement. MacDonald was an imposing figure, with polished manners and a clear voice. But according to the testimony of people who knew him well, all that was a front behind which lurked a petty intriguer, a man of boundless conceit and vanity. In his heart he despised and feared the British workers, and he was as consistently hostile to the Soviet Union and to communism as were the Conservatives.

Leadership of the Labour Party is gained, as a rule, by outright careerists who are well aware that one can only make a career within a bourgeois state by serving that state. They are a product of the British political system. Over the centuries an attitude has been evolved in Britain that treats political activity as a species of business. For British bour-

geois politicians, political activity is not a way of serving the people, or society, or an idea, it is a means of making a career which if successful can bring power and money. In this respect the right-wing Labour leaders are no different from any other bourgeois politicians.

Basically MacDonald was a man of this type. He not only took on the premiership, he assumed the duties of Foreign Secretary as well. The other members of his government also came from the right wing of the Labour Party. Among them were some entirely bourgeois figures, whom he included in his Cabinet to give it a greater air of respectability in bourgeois eyes.

None the less, the formation of the first Labour Government in British history was an important event in the life of the country. From that time onward, the Labour Party became one of the parties alternating in office, while the Liberal Party for practical purposes departed from the stage, yielding up its place to Labour. This new disposition of forces had to be taken into account by the Conservatives too, one of whose representatives in the House of Commons was Anthony Eden. The young Conservative was beginning his political life at an interesting moment.

In February 1924 he made a speech in the House. The maiden speech of a newly elected MP is a sort of baptism. It is awaited with interest. How will the debutant politician make out? Very, very rarely an extremely talented youngster will amaze the House with his speech and leave a lasting impression. But as a rule such speeches are very ordinary, and they are applauded purely from courtesy. Anthony Eden's maiden speech in Parliament was strictly of the latter sort. He realised it himself, and later on recalled his "debut" with dissatisfaction.

Eden spoke in a debate arising out of a resolution moved by the Conservatives on the money to be allocated to the Air Force. The resolution affirmed: "Great Britain must maintain a Home Defence Air Force of sufficient strength to give adequate protection against air attack by the strongest air force within striking distance of her shores." This was in 1924. No one as yet was capable of threatening Britain, and the word "defence" as used here is an example of the usual hypocrisy, which makes the reading of English political materials so difficult. In actual fact, under the conditions then prevailing the Conservative motion was a call to engage in an armaments race.

Eden, naturally, supported his party's position. True, he found himself in an awkward corner when someone asked from what quarter an air attack might be expected, and had to admit that he did not know, but went on to insist that "the Government will, as a matter of insurance, protect this country from the danger of attacks from the air". Then he "raised" his approach to the level of general military strategy, and declared that "attack is the best possible form of defence".

All Eden's biographers agree that his maiden speech in the House of Commons was pale and unimpressive, but some of them consider that in the last resort this was all to the good: he roused no envy or ill-will among his colleagues. Randolph Churchill's judgement is the most severe. "In later life," he writes, "Eden's speeches were often to be ghost-written for him ... his maiden speech ... he composed himself." "The careful choice of cliché," continues his sharp-tongued biographer, "the avoidance of anything even bordering on the controversial and of any original thought or phrase, seem to have been noted by those who drafted his speeches fifteen and twenty years later. And the ghosts who drafted his speeches and communiqués when he was in a position to procure their services are entitled to commendation on the authentic way in which with his co-operation they conformed to the pattern set in this maiden speech."

All his life Anthony Eden tried to win friends, or at least well-wishers, and kept it a strict rule not to make enemies. For this reason, when he prepared a speech he made it a priority not to offend anyone. His biographer Rees-Mogg notes: "When he is discussing the script of one of his speeches he will go through it with immense care, and if there is a phrase which seems too sharp or too cutting he will remove it. This can make the speeches rather dull, but it avoids giving offence."

Eden made his debut at a time when a wave of pacifism, a kind of reaction against the First World War, was sweeping many countries including Britain. Condemnation of war as an amoral act was widespread, feelings that disarmament was desirable were growing stronger, and faith in the League of Nations as an instrument of peace-making was on the increase. Eden's maiden speech struck a discordant note here. This was hardly a chance accident. Eden was in step with his party, and the Conservative imperialists not only wanted but officially demanded new armaments. In this

respect Eden's maiden speech helps us to understand better the nature of his activities in the years when he was a Minister for League of Nations Affairs.

Eden's subsequent speeches in the House show no marked line. He seems to be searching, feeling for the sphere of activity on which he should concentrate. In 1924 he spoke on the peace treaty with Turkey. This was a successful speech, for the speaker was talking of things he knew well: Eden was even then an expert on Middle Eastern affairs. But he also takes part in debates on housing, on allowances to the families of men serving in the armed forces, and he even concerns himself with the memorial erected to Queen Victoria's husband Prince Albert. Eden did not like the Albert Memorial, in fact he called it "a national disaster".

The young Member visited his constituency frequently, and spoke there. For voters need to be cultivated, lest they feel that their Member has got above himself and is neglecting those who sent him to Parliament. Only the most firmly established politicians, with solid, indestructible reputations, can dare to leave their electors unvisited for long periods. Eden was a long way from that position as yet.

Before long Eden's relations with his electors had to undergo a re-testing. The first Labour Government lasted less than a year: in October 1924 there was another General Election.

The right-wing Labour leaders forming the government find themselves, when in power, between the hammer and the anvil. The rank-and-file members of the party, whose votes have put their leaders into Parliament and given them the right to form a government, wait impatiently for "their" government to take measures that will improve their, the voters', situation. At the same time, bourgeois circles are keeping a keen watch on the actions of the Labour Government, to make sure that it does not damage capitalist interests too much. The government dare not ignore either of these forces. The result—panic-stricken manoeuvrings, with the working people getting very insignificant concessions, as a rule no more than they would have got from a Conservative Government under popular pressure.

MacDonald's Cabinet was obliged to take into consideration the unanimous demand by the British workers for normalisation of diplomatic relations with the USSR. Normal relations were established in February 1924, and in August two agreements, a general and a trade, were signed. At roughly the same time the government was obliged, again under pres-

sure from the workers, to abandon the prosecution that had recently been brought against J. R. Campbell, acting editor of a communist publication. It was the attacks mounted in Parliament by both Conservatives and Liberals against the government on these issues which forced the government to dissolve Parliament and call a new election.

That election had gone down in history thanks to the so-called "Comintern letter". At the height of the election campaign, the Conservative press printed a forged letter supposedly emanating from the Communist International and making reference to the preparation of an armed uprising in Britain. That this was a forgery became apparent straight away. Its object was to scare the British electorate with the "horrors of revolution" and so induce them to vote for the Conservatives and not for Labour. Although ruling circles in Britain were perfectly clear on the nature of this "document", the Foreign Office—headed by MacDonald—sent a Note of protest to the Soviet Government. By this act the government accorded the forgery the status of a genuine document.

In this way the Conservatives and MacDonald ensured defeat for Labour and a decisive victory for the Conservative Party in the 1924 General Election.

The new election went well for Eden. His authority in his constituency had grown. He campaigned actively on the two questions at issue, condemning the Labour Government for stopping the prosecution of Campbell, the communist publication editor. Eden's speeches were those of any ordinary Tory enemy of the Soviet Union, full of abuse for the Bolshevik Government that was "actuated by motives of hostility to the British Empire and to all it stands for". Is it surprising that a young politician, an imperialist and an aristocrat, should take up this position as regards a country which had removed the exploiters and raised the banner of struggle against imperialism, the most striking embodiment of imperialism at that time being Britain herself?

The man who formed the Conservative Government was, once again, Stanley Baldwin—a big industrialist, closely linked with heavy industry. He represented the "middle-aged" generation of Conservative leaders. From the "old guard" he had in his Cabinet Austen Chamberlain (as Foreign Secretary), son of a well-known 19th century Birmingham industrialist and popular politician, also Winston Churchill, man of remarkable talent and immense will-power.

Baldwin's government wanted a quiet life at home and abroad. But it did not succeed in getting it. In 1926 the strike movement reached its culmination: for the first time in British history there was a General Strike, which paralysed economic life and shook the capitalist fabric of the country. In foreign affairs, rivalry with France finally ended in Britain's favour with the Locarno agreements, which were to confirm British gains in the post-war peace settlement. At the same time, London acted as a consistent enemy to the Soviet Union and attempted, though unsuccessfully, to organise fresh intervention against the Land of Soviets. Britain also made active efforts to counter the Chinese revolution. So in fact it appeared that Baldwin, and those whom he represented, wanted peace and quiet only on their own conditions.

Eden continued to build his political career. The political situation within the Conservative Party at that time was unstable, and Baldwin's position none too secure. At such a juncture miscalculation is only too easy. But Eden none the less counted on Baldwin.

He had a distinct understanding of Baldwin's aims in both home and foreign policy, and in his own speeches he did his best to substantiate and support the Baldwin line. It would be wrong to argue that in this Eden was doing violence to his own conscience and convictions. Baldwin's general conception, and the calm manner in which he presented it, lacking unnecessary noise or affectation, fitted in well with Eden's own calm character and aversion to risky undertakings. This sympathy made the young Member's position so much the easier.

The press lords—Beaverbrook and Rothermere—were making an onslaught upon Baldwin in their newspapers *The Daily Express* and *The Daily Mail*. They demanded that Britain should curb activity in the Middle East. Eden certainly showed decision in coming out quite definitely and unconditionally against the press lords and in support of his party leader. It is hard to say whether this was an intuitive feeling that Baldwin was going to come out on top, or sheer luck, which can sometimes assist even punters at the races.

Eden took up a stance of active support for Baldwin in his fight against the Liberal Lloyd George. In 1922 Baldwin had played a very operative part in breaking up the Tory-Liberal coalition. Lloyd George had had to leave office, and he became a consistent critic of the Conservatives in general

and Baldwin in particular. The latter responded with undying hatred of Lloyd George. It is said that people hate those whom they have injured; Baldwin's attitude to the veteran Liberal leader certainly seems to support that view.

Stanley Baldwin was a clever enough politician and an energetic party leader. But viewed in comparison with such vivid personalities as, say, Lloyd George and Winston Churchill, he appeared a very pale figure. Baldwin knew this, and created his own manner accordingly. Pipe in mouth and smile of shrewd simplicity in place, he looked like some prosperous farmer known for his successes in pig-breeding (which actually was one of his hobbies). Lord Birkenhead, recalling the days when they worked together in the coalition government under Lloyd George, said they used to regard Baldwin as "the idiot boy of the Cabinet". When in 1923 Baldwin first headed a government, many of his opponents held that this was a government of second-class minds. Ambitious people commonly find it difficult to admit anyone else's superiority. How could Baldwin, who had attained the highest office of state and the position of leader of his own party, accept this? He forgave Lloyd George nothing, nor others too.

Eden likewise missed no opportunity to be critical of his leader's opponent. As a general rule Anthony did not attack anyone personally, so as not to make a permanent enemy, but in the case of Lloyd George he abandoned his rule and attacked him systematically over a number of years, which did him a lot of good with Baldwin.

"Eden," says Randolph Churchill, "like many other ambitious young men of the party, early observed that under the leadership of Baldwin advancement would come by discreet and unquestioning services to the party and the Government rather than by trying to impose his own personality or will-power upon the House of Commons... Promotion in the main went not by merit or outstanding abilities, but by solid devoted services to the party and the Government."

In 1925 Eden combined some journalism with his Parliamentary work. His wife's father was co-owner of a respectable provincial newspaper, the *Yorkshire Post*, and from time to time Anthony had articles on Parliamentary affairs, signed "Back-Bencher", printed in this, also book-reviews and art criticism. In the summer of 1925 he took part, on behalf of the *Yorkshire Post*, in an Imperial press conference in Australia. He always liked travel, and on this occasion the trip was both long (about six months) and interesting; Eden

enjoyed it thoroughly. The group going to Australia included several young people, who later achieved notable careers as well as the subsequently notorious reactionary Lady Astor and her husband. The British party first went to Canada by ship, then across Canada by train from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Then on by sea again, with a halt at the scenic islands of Hawaii, to New Zealand and Australia. The return journey was made via the Indian Ocean, with a call at Ceylon.

The reports which Eden sent back to his paper in the course of the journey show his desire to understand the problems facing the British Empire. But he was unable to deal with them with any depth. Some readers sceptically remarked that the only "hard" information in these articles came from tourist hand-outs. All, however, were agreed in approval of the passages describing scenery, in which Eden's artistic taste came to the fore. Be that as it may, after his return to England Eden had the articles published in a slim booklet, entitled *Places in the Sun*, with a foreword by Stanley Baldwin himself. The very fact that the Prime Minister and party leader felt called on thus to introduce a rank-and-file young Member of Parliament to the reading public, was taken as pregnant with meaning. After this people began to say that young Eden was a protégé of Baldwin's. And this was far from unimportant for a young man beginning a career in politics.

Anyone reading Eden's speeches and articles over the seven years before he first received a government post must inevitably reach the conclusion that the speaker, or writer, was bending all his efforts towards keeping strictly in line with his party and its leaders. Eden's public pronouncements provide the material from which we can form an estimate of how his convictions had taken shape by the late twenties, by which time the formation of his character had been completed.

The Conservative Party brings together people whose political views as a whole correspond to the interests of British monopolies, but these views differ in part, when it comes to the means whereby those interests should be served. There is a clearly defined right wing and left wing within the party. While right-wingers (Hicks, Churchill, etc.) were in favour of using force to quell the labour movement, a number of young Conservatives thought it possible, and necessary, to avert class confrontations by organising "co-partnership" between industrialists and workers. The party leader,

Baldwin, was more or less in the centre, while Eden was a little to the left of the centre.

The unusual exacerbation of the class struggle in 1926 made the Conservatives look around for some means of averting similar outbursts. By the united efforts of industrialists and right-wing trades union leaders, the mechanics of "co-partnership" were elaborated. This system became known as Mondism, after Sir Alfred Mond, who was in charge of the negotiations with the General Council of TU. Contemporary caricaturists produced apt representations of the Conservative dream of class peace. The cartoons show Baldwin watching with approval as the representatives of capital and labour shake hands, with a rainbow shining over them.

Eden's views on the class struggle were developing along the same lines. He spoke in favour of doing away with strikes. "The Conservative objective," said Eden, "... must be to spread the private ownership of property as widely as possible, to enable every worker to become a capitalist." To attain this, very vaguely outlined government measures to assist industry were to be taken. He maintained that it was necessary to develop "schemes of co-partnership in industry. If the Conservative ideal is to be attained, the workers in industry must have an increasing personal share in its progress, with which will then march a greater personal concern for its well-being."

One must really have no idea of the nature of the relationship between labour and capital, or of economic problems in general, to propose making every worker a capitalist. Sir Alfred Mond was far from cherishing such illusory projects. But Eden apparently took it seriously. When he published his Memoirs thirty-five years later, he quoted his remarks on the subject, made in 1929, without any qualification.

The Conservatives understood that they must apply themselves to "taming" the upper stratum of the working class, by working on the leaders of the Labour Party and the trades unions. It is interesting to see the advice Baldwin gave to young Conservative MPs on how to treat Labour Members. "Though," Baldwin said, "you may have had better educational advantages, do not presume upon that, they know more about unemployment insurance than you! Above all, never be sarcastic at their expense!"

The idea of replacing class struggle by class "co-partnership" brought together a group of young Conservatives, including Eden and half a dozen others. They arranged to

meet once a week for dinner and discussion of various political problems, and to support one another in the House. "Stanley Baldwin was accessible," writes Eden, "and to members of our small group he was the most sympathetic, sharing our youthful ideas for a progressive Conservatism."

While in home affairs Eden and those who thought like him were trying to damp down class struggle and social contradictions, in the international field they expressed themselves to the contrary, being in favour of applying extreme measures against the Soviet Union. The British Conservatives did a great deal to heighten tension in international affairs during the latter half of the twenties. In Britain and outside it, they staged a series of major provocations against the USSR, and broke off diplomatic relations with the USSR in 1927. At the same time, there was a very marked stepping-up of efforts by the leading imperialist powers to organise further armed intervention against the USSR. The Conservative Government of Britain was the principal enemy of the Soviet Union at that time.

Anthony Eden totally and absolutely shared and supported the policy of hostility to the USSR operated by Baldwin and his Foreign Secretary, Austen Chamberlain. He frequently spoke in the House of Commons in ridicule of the idea of concluding agreements to normalise relations with the USSR, stirring up alarm at "the Soviet threat" and discoursing on the "subversive" nature of Soviet propaganda.

This last theme was an especially persistent one in his speeches, and hardly surprisingly. For over twenty years, from the October Revolution up to the Second World War, British ruling circles insistently demanded that the USSR should give up "anti-British propaganda". It is a theme that has been touched on fairly often in the last twenty-five years also.

In raising the matter of "propaganda", the British side was in effect demanding that the entire nature of all material on Britain published in the USSR should be changed. That is, that Soviet journals, newspapers and books should treat British life and British foreign policy not from the standpoint of Marxism-Leninism, but in a manner that suited the British bourgeoisie: that they should, for instance, say nothing about the causes of class conflict within Britain, or about Britain's exploitation of her numerous colonies, the imperialist nature of her foreign policy, and so on. In other words, British ruling circles were demanding that ideo-

logical work in the USSR should be run on lines of bourgeois "objectivity". Of course, the Soviet Union could not do other than reject such demands.

The way in which the British side stated this question was eloquent of many things: of the acuteness of the ideological struggle, and of the fact that the existence of the USSR was opening the eyes of the British working people and helping to tear apart the many layers of deceit and misrepresentation constantly wound around them by the bourgeois system of ideological enslavement to paralyse their will to fight.

It was natural that in his speeches Eden should devote much attention to problems of the British Empire, especially after his round-the-world trip of 1925. From his journey Eden brought back a conviction that close links between the mother country and the dominions were a matter of mutual advantage to all. He was struck by the lack of knowledge of life in the dominions prevalent in Britain, and vice versa. This is pretty well the only point made in his *Places in the Sun*. If one bears in mind that at the given period the dominions were persistently striving to extend their political rights, that a year later they achieved recognition of their independence in both home and foreign policy, and of their juridical equality with Britain, one can draw the conclusion that the book's author was clearly unwilling, or unable, to set forth the true state of affairs within the British Empire.

Eden kept to the same line in his later utterances on Imperial problems. He tried to show that the high percentage of "failed" emigrants from the mother country, who left intending to settle permanently in one or another dominion, but ended by coming back, was due to the fact that those emigrating were badly prepared, and ignorant of the conditions they would find in their new home. This was a favourite theme in his speeches. But soon more serious matters appeared in them: Eden was campaigning for the introduction of preferential tariffs in trade between the countries within the Empire. He had not, of course, thought this up himself: the Conservatives had long been planning legislation on Imperial Preference, and brought it in a few years later. Eden's speeches on Imperial affairs caused one of his biographers to remark later that they helped "to give Eden a certain prestige in high places" and "were calculated to appeal to elderly imperialists".

Eden's stance towards the United States of America is

also worthy of note. From the very outset of his political career he was convinced that cooperation with the USA was extremely important for British foreign policy. "A greater measure of understanding between this country and the United States is the most important objective that the Government of this country could set before us," he said in April 1929. "[It is] the most formidable safeguard for world peace."

As Eden acquired political maturity, he began to take a wider and a deeper view, realising that the contradictions between Britain and the United States, especially in the fight for world markets, were very grave. But this did not alter his basic conviction. The faithfulness with which he pursued his line vis-à-vis the USA made him, later on, the most popular British Foreign Secretary there has ever been in America.

The safeguarding of world peace is mentioned in the above quotation with the underlying assumption that this is, self-evidently, the aim of British foreign policy. Eden will continue to speak in this way hundreds or even, perhaps, thousands of times. It is therefore essential to elucidate exactly what these words mean when they are used by Eden, or by the many other British bourgeois politicians who assume the role of peace-makers.

Britain is an imperialist power, and the foreign policies of imperialism have an organic tendency towards aggression and war. But it would be a mistake to assume that in imperialist policy—in this case, in British policy—this tendency is invariably displayed at any given moment. If Britain's interests are secure, under the international settlement prevailing at a particular moment, then she will see it as in her interest to preserve that settlement and to avert war if possible, inasmuch as it might disturb or destroy the existing state of affairs. This was the case after the First World War, for example, when Britain had an interest in preserving the settlement made at Versailles.

In other words, British policy is concerned to preserve only that kind of peace which serves her interests. If the conditions of an existing peace are not serving British interests, then British ruling circles will try to find a solution through war, having first of course taken the traditional precautions to ensure that the main burden of war will be borne by others. Since British interests are to be found in various quarters of the globe, a situation often arises in

which Britain is actively concerned for peace in one place, while in another she is simultaneously preparing or unleashing war.

In the twenties, for instance, the British Government had no interest in the peace being broken in Western Europe, but at the same time had no objection to attempts to organise armed intervention against the USSR, while also fighting the Chinese revolution. As a prominent specialist in British history, V. I. Popov, quite rightly notes: "British ruling circles set forth to aggravate relations with the Soviet state, with the aim of organising a system of anti-Soviet diplomatic and military alliances and so preparing an anti-Soviet war." In the thirties Britain did not, again, want war in Western Europe, but persistently worked to prepare and provoke war between Germany and the Soviet Union. And British ruling circles disguised the zigzagging line of their foreign policy with talk of peace, because they had to keep their own people in continued ignorance of the true nature of their policy. The actual word "peace" is one of those most frequently used in the lexicon of British politicians. Probably some of them are victims of their own propaganda and take the word to mean just what it says. But only some of them.

Public opinion in many countries, in the twenties and thirties, bound up their hopes for peace with the activities of the League of Nations. Eden did not share those hopes. He had no faith in the possibilities of that organisation, or only in a very narrow interpretation of these possibilities. "What I had hoped of the League, and hope still, is that its greatest benefit will be by the opportunities it will create for statesmen of different nationalities to meet and exchange ... opinions." Baldwin thought the same, seeing the value of the League in the possibilities it afforded for discussion of international problems by representatives of European countries. In Eden's utterances on the League of Nations the ruling note is one of scepticism, plus the belief that multilateral agreements (bloes on the Locarno model) suit British interests best.

In this sphere also Eden's views were totally and entirely in accord with the positions adopted by the Conservative Party and government. Britain, unlike France, always wanted to see the League weak and without powers, a mere forum for discussion of international problems. This fondness for Locarno and scepticism with regard to the League of Nations were further expressions of Britain's persistently

negative attitude to the ideal of collective security, as evinced over many decades of the 20th century.

By the end of the twenties, Eden had evolved a fairly clear-cut concept of international relations, which he adhered to until the end of his political career. This concept, in which a pragmatic approach to problems of British foreign policy is blended with rather idealistic premises regarding the actions of countries and governments, was quite crude even from the viewpoint of various scholars within the bourgeois world. Eden takes absolutely no account of underlying motives for the actions of peoples and governments. Economic contradictions, as forming one of the motive forces in world politics, are given no consideration at all.

He seeks the roots of all international discord and wars in human nature, in the moods and feelings of nations. According to Eden, war can only be got rid of when you have made the necessary changes and alterations in the "passions" of nations. "To expect," he declared, "the League to change human nature in a year or two was an extravagant expectation." And again: "You will not change by one instrument or in one day the passions of nations. It must take time." A similar mixture of pragmatism and idealism can be met with among bourgeois statesmen of our day also. But it was particularly widespread in the years when Eden's active political career was getting under way.

The principal part in Eden's concept is played by his reading of Britain's role and place in world politics. Here he is an outright imperialist, following in the footsteps of his numerous predecessors and keeping in step with his party. At the very dawn of his career Eden had been saying: "It was of the first importance that our influence, as the stabilizing nation of Europe, should be strong," thus in effect claiming hegemony in Europe for Britain. Eden devoted many years of his life to fighting for that claim.

In 1925 an important event in Eden's career took place—he became Parliamentary Private Secretary to Locker-Lampson, Under-Secretary to the Home Office. The job itself is no great prize, it involves a lot of technical, organisational work in the House of Commons, nor does it carry any salary—it means being a personal aide, no more, and in this case to an Under-Secretary, not a full Minister. But this job brought a great deal with it for the young politician.

Locker-Lampson had a very good relationship with his chief, the Foreign Secretary Austen Chamberlain, whose

Parliamentary Private Secretary he had himself been for a time. So when Chamberlain's aide Lumley resigned, Chamberlain turned to Locker-Lampson for advice on whom to take as a replacement. Locker-Lampson recommended Eden. Lumley associated himself with the recommendation (he and Anthony had been friends since their university years). Chamberlain, who had already formed his own opinion of Eden on the grounds of the latter's parliamentary performance, took favourable note of their suggestion and made Eden his PPS. This was an important step upwards. It was one which finally determined the future path of the young Member. Recalling his appointment thirty years later, Eden was to write: "I am now astonished to read how soon I was propelled into the political stratosphere."

The appointment was made in July 1926. By this time Eden had already been three years an active Member of Parliament. His new duties amounted, in effect, to acting as connecting link between Members and the Minister, conveying to the latter the Members' views of foreign policy matters. In view of this it was the tradition that a Parliamentary Secretary should not speak (or not often speak, at least) on matters coming within his chief's competence. For Eden this was frustrating—he had already got the taste for discussions of international issues.

But this inconvenience was compensated many times over by the immense advantages which the new job gave him. All his biographers are agreed that it was a great stroke of luck for him when he was taken on as "apprentice" to Austen Chamberlain. The young politician was thereby placed at the very centre of governmental policy debates and decision-making on international affairs. Eden had all the attributes needed to make him "go down well" with Chamberlain (calmness, reserve, education, efficiency, a pleasing appearance), and he exerted himself to perform his new duties in the best possible manner. This won him Chamberlain's favour, and this he enjoyed thereafter until his patron's eventual death.

Working with Chamberlain took Eden to Geneva, to the headquarters of the League of Nations, long before he himself became Minister for League of Nations Affairs. A few weeks after Eden had been appointed to his new post Chamberlain proposed that he should accompany him to Geneva. That time Anthony was not able to take the offer up, but a year later he was able to accompany the Foreign Secretary to a session of the League of Nations.

At that time the Council of the League met four times a year, and the member countries were usually represented by their Foreign Ministers. Germany was brought into the League in 1926, which meant that the Foreign Ministers of all the great and "middling" powers, with the exception of the USSR and the USA, foregathered in Geneva. The sessions lasted a week, and the Ministers were able to meet one another for informal talks and discussions, and these were considered to be of greater importance than the debates in the Council.

"I did not travel to Geneva in a haze of confidence," Eden recalled later. "My mood was rather one of watchful interest with a streak of scepticism." But his first trip to Geneva afforded him considerable satisfaction none the less. A journey by the Foreign Secretary was in itself an event in those days. The Minister and his suite were seen off at Victoria Station by the top-hatted station-master and a bevy of Foreign Office officials. At Dover the harbour-master met them and saw them on to their boat. On the French side the Minister was greeted by the Mayor of Calais. Then it was the train to Paris, and the obligatory dinner at the British Embassy. In the evening the party took the night train for Switzerland from the Gare de Lyon. In Geneva they were met at the station by the entire staff of the British mission to the League. That is how things were in the old days. As time passed, the procedure became a lot simpler.

The British party stayed at the Hôtel Beau Rivage, on the shore of Lake Lemman. This was the regular place of sojourn for Chamberlain and his party when visiting Geneva. Not far from the Beau Rivage was the Hôtel des Bergues, on the bank of the Rhône, which housed the headquarters of the French Foreign Minister, Briand. Chamberlain would meet his opposite numbers for lunch or dinner. Stresemann, Germany's Minister for Foreign Affairs, would come for lunch. The talk at table was of international affairs. Anthony Eden, also present at these ministerial meals, would listen attentively. Here was "high policy" being made before his very eyes; he was being given object-lessons in British diplomacy.

The Conservative Government's reactionary home and foreign policies were evoking more and more discontent within the country. According to English historians, by 1929, when a General Election was due, the country was anxious for a change. It was therefore natural that the Conservatives

were defeated in the election, losing 159 seats in the House of Commons. The Labour Party was victorious, gaining 28 seats. Baldwin's Cabinet resigned, and MacDonald formed the second Labour government.

Eden, however, survived the test of an election and kept his seat. His Parliamentary successes had increased his authority among the electors. Eden's position in the Warwick and Leamington constituency was becoming ever more secure. As tradition required, he made more frequent visits to the area at election time, bringing his wife with him and participating in various evening parties and dances. The constituency boundaries were extended, and the candidate had to travel round numerous villages making speeches. Eden relates how once he arrived at a village in the evening to find an audience consisting of the Conservative election agent and two local reporters. But he still had to make his speech. The voters must be respected, nothing indicative of contempt was admissible. That would lose votes.

In 1930 Britain, like other capitalist countries, was shaken by an acute economic crisis, all the more severe because there had been no economic boom preceding it. Industrial production fell sharply. Unemployment shot up.

When the pound tottered in 1931, MacDonald tried to save the situation by cutting unemployment benefits and other social expenditures. Given the acute poverty prevailing not only among the unemployed but with many of those in work as well, this was a provocative challenge to the working class. The workers' fury was so great that the Labour Ministers, with three exceptions, dared not support MacDonald's proposals. The Prime Minister then opted for outright betrayal, and reached an agreement with Baldwin and with Liberal leaders on the formation of a coalition government. The Conservatives left MacDonald as Prime Minister, and the other three Labour deserters in their ministerial posts. That was the façade. The real power within government rested with the Conservatives. Baldwin, as Deputy Premier, was more a Prime Minister than MacDonald, who was permitted to perform at the front of the political stage for a number of years. The "National" Government formed then continued in existence, with many modifications, for fifteen years. The Labour Party took a long time to recover from the desertion of its leaders.

All these alarms and excursions strengthened Eden's hand. The Conservative Party had been in opposition just

over two years. Those two years were a difficult period in its history. The troubles afflicting British capitalism aroused fierce conflict within the party over the future lines of development for Britain and its empire. To this were added personal ambitions and the fight for power within the party. Winston Churchill made a desperate attempt, as the English historian A.J.P. Taylor notes, to oust Baldwin from the leadership of the Conservative Party, attacking his policy on India. Baldwin survived. He also survived when the press lords, Beaverbrook and Rothermere, formed the United Empire Party with the object of overthrowing Baldwin and changing Conservative Imperial policy. On all these occasions Eden remained faithful to Baldwin's group, which soon brought its reward.

In 1932 an international Conference on Disarmament was to take place, and the British Government began to prepare for it in good time. In March 1931 MacDonald decided to form a three-party committee (Labour, Liberal and Conservative representatives) to prepare for the conference. The Conservative representatives were Austen Chamberlain, Samuel Hoare (former Secretary of State for Air) and Anthony Eden, who was included at the suggestion of Baldwin and Chamberlain. This was a mark of their great trust in this young politician.

This was Eden's first experience of discussing international problems at the highest level—that of the Cabinet. And as he later confessed, he liked the experience. Now he looked forward to being made a junior Minister. Indeed, things were going in such a way that the prize seemed to beckon from the not too distant future, if he was lucky. A man who was in all respects "one of ours" could not stay neglected for long. Bourgeois Britain needed people who could fight, actively and skilfully, for the interests of the British Empire.

Chapter II

THE FIRST STAGE IN THE POLICY OF "APPEASEMENT"

The day after the formation of the "National" Government Philip Snowden, one of MacDonald's supporters, remarked to him that he would be very popular in aristocratic circles. MacDonald replied, gleefully rubbing his hands: "Yes, tomorrow every Duchess in London will be wanting to kiss me." He was a man of boundless vanity, and all his life he had been trying to win acceptance and recognition in such circles. Now, with his flight to their camp, the dream came true.

MacDonald was expelled from the Labour Party as a traitor, and as such he has gone down in the history of the British and the international working-class movement.¹ Ruling circles, however, repaid the service MacDonald had done them most generously. They let him remain as Prime Minister until 1935, and from then until his death in 1937 he was Lord President of the Council, with ministerial rank.

Decades have passed, but bourgeois historians and writers of memoirs are still praising MacDonald. Among them Eden, who in 1962 wrote that MacDonald's formation of the "National" Government seemed to him to be "a necessary deed and a brave one". How could it be otherwise: official British propaganda and ideology see it as very important to praise and ennoble any class betrayal which helps the bourgeoisie.

The coalition, or "National"* Government, had a Cabinet or directive nucleus—the senior Ministers, whose very salary is greater than that of their colleagues—of no more than ten men. Four places were reserved for MacDonald and companion renegades from Labour. Besides MacDonald, who retained the post of Prime Minister by "grace" and favour of the Conservatives, these were Philip Snowden (Chancellor

* In using the word "National", those taking part in the coalition wished to indicate that their government represented the interests of no single party, but those of the whole nation. In fact it was a government in which the Conservatives predominated and advanced their policies.

of the Exchequer as before), J. H. Thomas (who became Secretary of State for Dominions and Colonies) and Lord Sankey (Lord Chancellor). Such generosity to MacDonald's group on the part of the Conservatives has a very simple explanation: the government was about to introduce a number of measures to combat the economic crisis at the expense of the working people, measures which would be extremely unpopular, and Baldwin considered that it was in the interests of his party to make MacDonald & Co responsible for them in the eyes of the nation.

The Conservatives also took four portfolios for themselves. Baldwin became Lord President of the Council and Deputy Premier, Neville Chamberlain (step-brother of Austen) got the Ministry of Health, Samuel Hoare the India Office, and Cunliffe-Lister the Board of Trade. Two Liberals—Herbert Samuel and Lord Reading—became heads of the Home Office and the Foreign Office respectively.

The wreck of the Labour Government and its replacement by the "National" one was very opportune for Anthony Eden. If it had not happened, the next General Election would not have taken place until 1933 (the House of Commons being elected for a four-year term), and Eden would have had to content himself with the position of a Back-Bench member of his party, with that party in opposition for at least another two years. Now he found great possibilities opening up before him.

In 1931, when the change of government took place, Eden had hopes that he would not be forgotten. He thought he should be able to count on a junior ministerial post. But of course this was not and could not be a certainty, for a fierce struggle was being played out among the three parties and within each one of them." On top of that, he was still very young, and had been in Parliament for only eight years.

Eden recorded in his diary on August 27, 1931 that he had lunched that day with Austen Chamberlain, who told him that there was a chance that Anthony would get a post in the Foreign Office, and that he, Chamberlain, had got advance agreement to this from Lord Reading, who had been appointed Foreign Secretary. Baldwin was also going to speak to Reading about it. All the indications were that Baldwin favoured Eden's candidacy above all others. "The F.O.," notes Eden, "...with the S. of S. in the Upper House is higher than I hoped for, and I do not expect that I shall get it."

The next day the diary has this entry: "In due course the

summons came. S. B. [Stanley Baldwin] could not have been kinder. He told me that he wanted me to go to the F. O. where he had intended to send me for a spell himself if our party had been returned, and added that he regarded me as 'a potential Foreign Secretary' in about ten years' time and that was why he wanted me to have the experience as soon as possible. Unhappily there had been a hitch. Ramsay wanted his son to go there. He did not propose to agree. Reading wanted me at the F.O. as well as himself... Ramsay's son had been going to the Dominions Office but 'one of them shall be yours'... I told him that I would prefer the F.O., of the two. He said: 'Of course you would, of course you would.' "

In fact it was no simple matter for Baldwin to ensure that Eden got this junior ministerial post. Since the government was a coalition government, each of the three parties involved was doing its best to get a certain number of posts for itself, and everyone had to be as nearly satisfied as possible. And within the Conservative Party itself there were other able young men with as good a right as Eden to expect the post of Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, like Duff Cooper for instance.

The decisive factor in the final appointment was that Baldwin saw Eden as a "good man", who could be trusted and relied on. As far as objective requirements went, Eden had what was necessary: he had concerned himself for a number of years in Parliament with matters of foreign policy, and had had training under Austen Chamberlain—an eminent member of the Old Guard of the Conservative Party; he knew the internal workings of the Foreign Office, and was quite well informed on the state of affairs in Europe and in the Middle East.

By September 1 the matter was settled, and Eden became Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign Office.*

* Eden's biographers differ in their treatment and assessment of many events in his life. The circumstances of his appointment to the Foreign Office have been given here as in his own Memoirs. Here is the version given by Lewis Broad: "Eden's appointment was carried out in this manner. The names of a number of candidates considered to be suitable for the post were put down on a sheet of paper. This was placed before the Marquess [i.e. Lord Reading] to choose one from among them as his junior... Much more than the under-secretaryship hung in the balance as Lord Reading hesitated over the names. His choice fell upon Anthony Eden." There can be no doubt that Eden's own version is nearer to the truth.

He became not only an Under-Secretary, his duties included responsibility in the House of Commons for matters concerning his Ministry. The English tradition is that a Minister who is a peer can speak only in the House of Lords, not in the Commons. Since Lord Reading sat in the Upper House, it was Eden who had to speak in the House of Commons on matters of foreign policy. This gave additional weight and importance to the post he had received.

But in this same connection Eden sometimes had some unpleasant moments. In the Foreign Office, the person next in seniority to the Secretary of State himself is the Permanent Under-Secretary. Parties may come and go in office, Ministers arrive and depart again, but the Permanent Under-Secretary retains his post regardless of all the changes. He is in full charge of the internal apparatus of the Foreign Office and all its workings, and it is he who prepares, on the basis of the material available through this apparatus, the draft decisions for the Secretary of State on the matters for which he is responsible. The tradition is that the Secretary of State respects the opinion of his Permanent Under-Secretary, and as a rule, always follows his advice. In the years we are speaking of, the Permanent Under-Secretary received all reports from abroad, and passed them on to the Secretary of State and to some other members of the Cabinet. Eden only got this material as it came back from the Minister. One can imagine his embarrassment when those on the Treasury or Front Bench—the Cabinet Ministers—having read a cipher from Paris, say, started discussing with him the Ambassador's message which they had already read but he had not yet seen.

But all that was trivial compared to the fact itself that Anthony Eden at 34 years of age was already Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign Office.

Eden got his post at a difficult time for Britain and for the world. In 1931 Japan attacked the north-eastern provinces of China (Manchuria). With this action the forces of aggression started the flames in the first hotbed of the approaching Second World War. In Germany the Nazis were tearing their way to power.

The British economy was struggling in the grip of the crisis. The country's ruling circles, panic-stricken, set in motion emergency measures to cope with its economic difficulties. The "National" Government passed a number of measures, cutting unemployment benefits, the pay of civil

servants, and the pay of those in the armed forces. The result of this last was a spontaneous mutiny on board a squadron of battleships lying off the naval base at Invergordon. The Royal Navy, one of the main pillars of imperialist Britain, was no longer secure. Another pillar—the pound sterling—also began to wobble. Extreme measures had to be taken—the pound came off the gold standard.

The Conservatives felt that it would be in their interests to call a General Election before time and take advantage of the Labour Party's state of crisis to acquire a stable majority in the House of Commons for themselves. This would give them a free hand for another four years. The election took place in October. The desertion of the Labour leaders brought about a crushing defeat for the Labour Party. They lost 236 seats, and were left with only 52. The Conservatives, on the other hand, ended up with 473 instead of the 260 they had previously held. This gave the Conservatives an absolute majority in the House of Commons, enabling them to carry through any plans they liked.

Eden became a Member of the new Parliament with no trouble. He gained 29 thousand more votes than his Labour opponent. When the result had been announced, Eden appeared at the window of the Conservative Club and told the assembled crowds: "I think this is the best day's work for England we have ever done." No doubt he had in mind his party's success as well as his own.

The coalition of Conservatives, Liberals and MacDonald's group had asked for "a doctor's mandate" from the electorate, a mandate to "treat" the crisis-stricken economy of the country. And they got it. The treatment turned out to be as before, a new round of cuts in unemployment benefits. The response came in massive demonstrations and protest meetings, and clashes with the police. The Conservatives gradually and by stages brought in protectionist measures to defend the British internal market by customs duties and licences. It must be admitted that this was a sensible course. Britain was too weak to allow herself the luxury of free trade, faced with powerful competitors. Within the Conservative Party a struggle had been going on for decades over this question. It was now ended, with victory to the protectionists.

Eden took no active part in this struggle. At no time in his life did he have any interest in financial policy, or in home affairs in general, and he did not understand such matters very well. For a career in the field of foreign affairs all that

was irrelevant. In speeches he remarked, apropos of free trade and protection: "Perhaps it is true of ... the younger members of our party, that we are merely opportunists in these fiscal matters. I, personally, am prepared to plead guilty to the charge. It seems to me that the only useful test which can be applied in these fiscal controversies ... is the result which is actually achieved." The testing by results proved to be in favour of protection.

Immediately following the election changes were made in the "National" Government, with more Conservatives than before. Neville Chamberlain, who was gaining influence within the Conservative Party, took over the Treasury from Philip Snowden, who was given the sinecure of being Lord Privy Seal, and shortly afterwards was made a Viscount as well. Neville Chamberlain thus got the opportunity to carry through the protectionist measures he wanted, and he also emerged on to the finishing straight in the race for the Premiership. By tradition, the post of Prime Minister goes to the man who has previously been Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Lord Reading, with whom Eden had got on very well, had to hand over the Foreign Office to John Simon, with whom as it soon transpired he did not get on so well. Simon, a jurist of the first rank, had become a Cabinet Minister in Asquith's Liberal government in 1913. He had gained considerable popularity when in the late twenties he presided over a commission on the government of India. Although Simon belonged to the Liberal Party, his ideas were arch-reactionary. That was what got him such a responsible position.

Simon's arrival meant that Eden's functions in the Commons would be curtailed. Eden was the Minister's deputy in Parliament for matters concerning foreign affairs, and as Simon was also a member of the House of Commons and spoke there on all the most important foreign policy issues, Eden had to play a secondary part. But Eden was not pushed into the background. He was given the job of representing Britain at the League of Nations. His speeches at the League brought Eden a degree of popularity in Britain and outside it which he would never have attained in the House of Commons. Soon Eden was being spoken and written about much more than Simon or Baldwin.

British historians are pretty unanimous in holding that Simon did not make a good Foreign Secretary, because he had a legalistic turn of mind. When speaking on matters of foreign policy he would give in detail the arguments brought

forward by the various parties concerned, and his hearers were not always able to make out exactly what was London's position in all this, and what they were supposed to support. Baldwin once remarked that the Foreign Office seemed to have two policies—one pro-French, and the other pro-German. Whereas he, Baldwin, would prefer it if the arguments of Britain's opponents were given in rather less detail, and "our own conclusions and proposals" made more plain.

Everyone has his own specific traits. Simon had his, but they are not really the point here. In Britain Ministers get categorised as bad, good or excellent strictly on the basis of how successful or otherwise their policies have proved to be. As regards Simon, he was the first in the line of Foreign Secretaries who in the thirties followed the policy of "appeasement" of aggressive powers, the policy which led in 1938 to Munich, and in 1939 to the outbreak of the Second World War. "Simon's advent to the Foreign Office was to commence a disastrous era in which under successive Foreign Secretaries, himself, Hoare, Eden and Halifax ... Britain was fatuously conducted towards the second world war." Thus wrote Randolph Churchill. The important points to note in this statement are that it comes from a Conservative, an extreme reactionary and enemy of the Soviet Union, and secondly, that it places direct responsibility for British policy in the thirties not on Simon's shoulders only, but Eden's as well.

Both of them came to the Foreign Office when the "Locarno era" in British policy was coming to an end and was being replaced by the "Munich era". In both these periods, a basic factor in deciding the course London was to steer was the desire to channel German aggression and expansion towards the East, primarily against the Soviet Union.

International relations in the period between the two world wars went through rapid changes, much more rapid than in the 19th century or just prior to the First World War. This was the result of the quickening tempo of development by the major powers, and the increasing unevenness of that development. Life negated many carefully thought-out, well-presented foreign policy concepts. Ten years passed by, and Lenin's prognosis that the contradictions inherent in the Versailles-Washington system would blow it apart, was shown to be correct.

British foreign policy in the early thirties was determined by the contradiction existing between the two worlds—the capitalist and the socialist, in the given case represented by

British imperialism and the Soviet Union. There were also inter-imperialist contradictions between Britain and the countries defeated in the First World War—the “deprived” countries: Germany, Japan and Italy.

The first-mentioned contradiction was the one which London saw as most important and, for the sake of settling that, was even prepared to sacrifice some of its interests in the inter-imperialist sphere. The result was the creation of what came to be known as the policy of “appeasement”, appeasement of the aggressive, predatory fascist and militarist powers, and this policy was obstinately pursued by British ruling circles in the thirties. The idea of this ingenious—as its authors thought—policy was to use territorial, military, economic and political concessions to Germany, Italy and Japan to direct the expansionism of those countries elsewhere, primarily against the USSR. The end result of the policy as its creators saw it would be to wreck the Soviet Union and to satiate the fascist powers to such an extent that they would cease to be a threat to British interests. The cunning of the whole idea was in full accord with the traditions of imperialist foreign policy.

The actions of these British politicians succeeded in changing the very meaning of the word “appeasement”. Originally the word had the humane connotation of bringing satisfaction and peace to the human individual, to relations between people. By the end of the thirties it was a dirty word, disgraced and worthy of contempt, since it symbolised, by then, disgraceful complicity with the fascist predators, betrayal of whole countries and peoples in the selfish interests of imperialist politicians, and a treacherous deal made with criminal forces that left countless victims and inflicted boundless suffering upon mankind.

The class hatred of socialism in British ruling circles was translated into the anti-Soviet bias of the policy of “appeasement”. Today this is recognised even by bourgeois historians. Margaret George, for instance, published a book in 1965, in the USA, in which she demonstrated convincingly that it was indeed anti-communism which prevented the government in London realising in time the full danger to Britain of Nazi Germany. Naturally, contemporary defenders of “appeasement” rushed to argue down a historian who had dared to name the class basis of that shameful policy. But an English author, Neville Thompson, who took up the subject in 1971 and made a thorough study of Margaret

George's arguments and those of her opponents, was obliged to come to the conclusion that "George has the better argument". Thompson noted that "Conservative dislike and distrust of the U.S.S.R. in this period was ... axiomatic" and that in British ruling circles "for the Russian system there was nothing but thinly disguised fear and hatred". There are plenty of other similar admissions. On the basis of these A. J. P. Taylor reached the clear conclusion that Conservatives preferred national-socialism to communism.

The British press in the thirties made no secret of the fact that Nazi Germany was being "appeased" against the Soviet Union. There were frequent calls for the creation of a strong Central Europe under German leadership as a bulwark against Communist Russia. When the Soviet-French pact was signed in 1935, in the interests of defence against German aggression, British Conservatives saw it, according to Austen Chamberlain, as "almost a betrayal of Western Civilization". Hatred of the Soviet Union was to make the British Government inevitably an ally of fascism—socialism's bitterest foe.

Putting the policy of "appeasement" into practice was made considerably easier by the fact that not only the Conservatives, but Liberals and right-wing Labour men as well cherished deepest hatred of communism. In that respect there was indeed a "national unity" of a kind in Britain, in the period when "appeasement" was coming into being (by 1939 the situation had changed somewhat).

But the policy of "appeasement" was hostile not only to Soviet Union. It was directed against any striving towards freedom by humanity as a whole, against the progressive development of mankind. "Appeasement" was a concept in the highest degree reactionary.

It was a policy which damaged very directly the interests of many other countries in Europe and in Asia. The technique of "appeasement" was fairly simple: lumps of territory, or whole countries, were thrown into the ravening maw of fascism. Japanese militarism, for example, was "appeased" at the expense of China. Italian fascism was kept happy by having Ethiopia and Somalia sold off to it cheap. A series of countries in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe was betrayed by the "appeasers" into the hands of German Nazism. The situation in Central Europe was discussed in detail on numerous occasions in British ruling circles; the area was known as "the earthquake zone" on account of its

instability. Certain countries were held to be "incapable" of solving their own problems independently; therefore they had best be transformed, under German leadership, into an economic and political union of sorts, which would be "a stabilising factor" in this restless region.

Such a plan, in its authors' opinion, could satisfy the aggressive aspirations of Nazism and make it favourably inclined towards Britain and her colonies. In helping Germany to create a colonial empire in Europe, British politicians hoped to induce her to abandon her claims to the colonies which had been taken from her after the First World War. And most important of all—this scheme pushed Germany in an easterly direction, towards the USSR.

This new line in London's foreign policy started to come into operation, in effect, from 1931, when Britain, assisted by France and some other countries, would not allow the League of Nations to take any action to prevent Japan pursuing her aggression against North-East China.

British ruling circles always operated the policy of "appeasement" at the expense of other countries and peoples, and always with the object of creating new situations in which the dominant role in Europe would be Britain's. For this reason they stubbornly insisted that any changes made should be only by means of agreements reached between the aggressor countries and Britain, i.e. that they should in effect only be made with Britain's agreement. But Germany and Italy, not wishing to be dependent upon Britain's "charity", and becoming progressively more convinced of the British Government's readiness to make concessions, were all the more anxious to present the latter with *faits accomplis*. In such cases "appeasement" took the form of non-intervention in the predatory acts committed by the aggressor countries; the "appeasers" would not hinder fascism from carrying out its fell work. Non-intervention was thus a variant of "appeasement". It was usually accompanied by ambiguous and toothless criticism addressed to the aggressor; this was a way of expressing displeasure at unilateral actions and of "giving satisfaction" to the masses of the people at home who were indignant over the acts of aggression.

The British Government "appeased" aggressors even at the expense of its own allies, actual or potential. Eleanor Rathbone, an Independent MP, defined "appeasement" at that period as a "plan of selling your friends in order to buy off your enemies—-which has the danger that a time comes

when you have no friends left, and then you find you need them, and then it is too late to buy them back".

Czechoslovakia, Austria, Poland and a number of other countries became the victims of "appeasement", and even France, inasmuch as "appeasement" radically affected her security. French ruling circles, anti-communist in attitude, tailed along behind British policy but demonstrated hesitations and indecision which evoked irritation in London. In that city they were too late in realising that "appeasement" was creating a mortal threat to Britain herself. "Appeasement" as a policy was of negative significance internationally, since it destroyed the security of many countries, handing them over one by one to the grip of fascism and opening it the way to war for world domination. The nations had to pay dearly for these crimes perpetrated by British imperialism and it was the peoples of the USSR who paid dearest of all, for they had to bear the brunt of the fight against fascism.

The "appeasers" asserted that as Germany, Italy and Japan had become significantly stronger (the fact that this had been achieved thanks to London's policy-makers was carefully passed over) the balance of power had changed in their favour, i.e. the forces which might have barred the way to aggression had been weakened. Hence it was hopeless to oppose the demands made by Germany, Italy and Japan.

Alexander Cadogan, who in the late thirties became the Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, wrote subsequently that Halifax, like Chamberlain and other "appeasers", believed it to be their duty "to make every effort to avert a war which we were almost certain to lose". Cadogan was not a stupid man, he knew the meaning of the policy pursued by the British Government at that time, he knew what it had led to, he knew that the front of nations which was formed against the aggressors, and which included Britain, did eventually win the war against fascism.

The British people had the wool pulled over their eyes, deliberately being given false forecasts of armed resistance to the aggressor.

True, the balance of power as between Britain and France, on the one hand, and Germany, Italy and Japan, on the other, had indeed changed in the aggressor nations' favour. Every act of "appeasement" incidentally made the situation worse for Britain. But it would be wrong to think that the balance of power between the countries thirsting for revanche and

aggression and those states which were prepared to resist them was less favourable to the latter in the thirties than it had been in the period prior to "appeasement". It was rather the reverse. The Soviet Union, successfully carrying through construction of a socialist state, had by the thirties been transformed into a strong power, capable of putting up decisive resistance to aggressors.

The USSR was not only able but eager to play an active part in averting war. In the early thirties it took the decision to forward the struggle for collective security. This struggle became the guideline of Soviet foreign policy, putting into practice Lenin's principle of peaceful coexistence among states with different social systems.

The British Conservatives not only used every possible means to work against Soviet efforts to organise collective resistance to aggression in Europe, they also showed stubborn reluctance to undertake any bilateral measures together with the USSR that might have strengthened peace. There is one reason and only one—class hatred for a socialist state. Unless account is taken of these attitudes and their prevalence among British ruling circles, it is impossible to make sense of their foreign policy.

Even the immediate threat of a world conflagration in 1939 did not make the British Government suppress its hatred of the Soviet Union and subordinate it to the urgent need to join its own efforts with the USSR to avert fascist aggression. Only when the truth became absolutely obvious in mid-1941, that Britain without the help of the USSR was incapable of avoiding defeat in the Second World War, only then were the ruling circles of Britain obliged to abandon open and official anti-Sovietism for a time and form a military alliance with the USSR. As soon as it appeared that the total defeat of Germany and her allies was already assured, British policy again began to be determined by hatred of the USSR and of socialism.

In the light of these indubitable facts it becomes clear how false were the assertions of the British "appeasers" that there were then no forces capable of halting the aggressors.

It should be added that the British ruling circles rejected the opportunities—small, it is true, but there none the less—which the League of Nations afforded for the organisation of collective security. After the USSR came into the League in 1934 these opportunities increased. But before two years had passed the "appeasers" had wrecked the League of Na-

tions and had practically reduced its importance to zero.

The United States of America must also bear its share of responsibility for "appeasement" and for Munich. But this should not obscure the fact that the USA (as President Roosevelt understood very well) had its own conflicts of interest with Germany, and even more so with Japan. With certain small exceptions the British Government was quite unwilling to make use of this factor in order to organise resistance to the aggressor (the Second World War showed how great were the potential possibilities here). The then Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, according to Cadogan, had "an almost instinctive contempt for the Americans". Of course it was not really a matter of the sympathies or antipathies of the Prime Minister. What irritated Chamberlain was the USA having pretensions to the leading role in world affairs, the role which Britain—he was quite convinced of it—ought to play. Thus there were Anglo-American conflicts in play as well.

An important question arises: was there any organised opposition in Britain to the policy of "appeasement", and if so, what results did it produce?

The only political organisation in the country which took up an unconditionally negative stance to "appeasement" as a policy, and held to it, was the Communist Party of Great Britain.

But the influence of the Communist Party in the country was small, and it was unable to hinder the Conservatives to any extent in their "appeasement" of fascism. This was so primarily because the leadership of the Labour Party followed a bourgeois-reformist policy. From time to time right-wing Labour spokesmen (and it was right-wingers who represented the Labour Party in Parliament) would make protests about the acts of the aggressor powers, and would criticise the policy of the "National" Government. But this was Parliamentary shadow-boxing rather than a fight on principle. Remaining actively anti-Soviet themselves, the Labour leadership could not and did not much try to organise effective resistance to the government line in foreign policy. More than that, some Labour representatives often came out in support of the "appeasers" policy. Arthur Henderson Jr., for example, declared in the House of Commons in February 1938: "There is no Hon. Member on this side of the House who has any objections to the policy of general appeasement to which the Prime Minister referred."

As regards the Liberals, they had long ago lost their position in the political life of the country. The "National Liberals", who were in the government, were in no way to be distinguished from dyed-in-the-wool Tories. John Simon, for instance, as Foreign Secretary was an unconditional supporter of "appeasement".

Paradoxical as it may seem, the bourgeois researchers who have concerned themselves with "anti-appeasement" trends in Britain concentrate mainly on the stands taken and the utterances made by certain individuals within the Conservative Party. The object of this can only be to gloss over the guilt of the Conservatives for the start of the Second World War. The innocent reader is thus led along to the following formulation: yes, there were among the Conservatives some foolish and unprincipled people, who adopted a policy which ended in shameful failure; but there were also men of great courage and high principle, who rejected the policy of complicity with fascism and boldly denounced its leaders. This "differentiated" approach is very important for Conservatives, since they are still actively engaged in the political arena and need votes in elections.

British Conservatism is not unique in its desire to minimise its responsibility for aiding fascism. After the victory of the peoples over Nazi Germany, this became something of a fashion in the bourgeois countries. Since fascism had stained itself with monstrous crimes, all those organisations and individuals who had collaborated with fascism have for decades been trying to make their collaboration, and hence their own guilt, appear as small as possible. Those who at the time took up a position of neutrality now often try to represent themselves as anti-fascist fighters. The exaggeration or invention of "services rendered" against fascism is not characteristic only of the Tories and their apologists. It is the typical reaction of bourgeois politicians to the historical defeat of fascism.

Study of the sources on this question brought Thompson, an American historian, to the following conclusion: "On closer examination Conservative opposition to appeasement is rather like a mirage: the more it is studied the less substantial it appears; but in this case it never vanishes completely. What remains is a picture of sporadic and discontinuous dissent, of individual critics and small cliques but no cohesive group... It is difficult to draw a clear-cut distinction between the appeasers and their opponents even in the last

part of the decade. Indeed the attempt to draw such a distinction would be misleading, as practically everyone was in favour of appeasement, if not of Germany then of Italy and certainly of Japan, at one time or another."

Until the Munich deal was concluded with the fascist powers, there were in effect no voices raised in the Conservative ranks against the policy of "appeasement". This includes Anthony Eden too, who has been elevated by English historiography to the status of "chief anti-appeaser" by an appropriate interpretation of his disagreement with Chamberlain and resignation from office in early 1938. In actual fact it was not quite like that.

Eden always considered it essential that the Treaty of Versailles should be reviewed in Germany's favour. He spoke of this publicly, though in somewhat veiled form. At an official dinner in 1932 he declared that there was the tendency in Europe to pay too much attention to the "mechanics of peace and too little to its fundamentals". By the "mechanics" was meant the settlement of Versailles, which in Eden's view should be re-considered so as to create mutual understanding and confidence between countries. Unless this was done it would be impossible to reach agreement on disarmament and preserve peace. This idea can be glimpsed in Eden's utterances even after the Nazis had come to power in Germany. In late 1933 he stated: "What was needed for the recovery of confidence in Europe [an odd formulation: had there ever been any confidence in Europe?—V.T.] was the removal of the causes of uneasiness." Meaning that the causes of Germany's and Italy's dissatisfaction should be removed.

In private conversation Eden was more definite. Three weeks before the Germans re-militarised the Rhineland he told Harold Nicolson that he was "prepared to make great concessions to German appetites provided they will sign a disarmament treaty and join the League of Nations" and that he intended "to work for this during the next three years".

A specific list of these concessions can be found in a memorandum for government Ministers drawn up by Eden on February 11, 1936: "Are we prepared, for instance," he wrote, "to recognize that Germany should have special trading privileges in certain areas, e.g., the Danube Basin? Are we prepared to surrender our most-favoured-nation right in order that this may be brought about? Are we prepared in certain circumstances to consider a guaranteed loan to Ger-

many? Are we prepared to consider the return to Germany, under mandate or otherwise, of even one of the colonies taken from her during the war? Are we prepared, more particularly if the German Government devalue the mark, to resist the probable pressure from interested parties in this country demanding the further exclusion of German goods from the British market? Are we prepared to consider with France and Belgium the abandonment of the demilitarised zone? Are we prepared, in fact, to approach Germany with proposals to collaborate so far as possible in a new period of European tranquility and economic reconstruction, instead of as hitherto waiting for her 'claims' and 'repudiations'?" It is worth noting that it is just this list of concessions to Nazi Germany, with very minor modifications, which was offered by the British Government to the Nazis during the secret talks in the summer of 1939.

Others beside Eden who figure in the list of "anti-appeasers" are Robert Vansittart, Leopold Amery and Winston Churchill.

Robert Vansittart is well known as a man of anti-German persuasions. It is a fact that he had a marked distrust for the deeds and declarations of the Nazi Government. But it was Vansittart and no other who insisted from the very beginning of the thirties that the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles ought to be revised, although understandably he did not come out in public with this idea. By 1936 he was speaking of the need to return to Germany the colonies which had been taken from her, "if we ever want lasting peace".

Leopold Amery, who represented the Imperial wing of the Tory Party, i.e. the Conservatives directly connected with exploitation of the peoples and the wealth of the colonial Empire, naturally objected categorically to returning Germany's former colonies. But he was prepared to "appease" Germany at the expense of the Central and Eastern European countries. Amery was also loud in his demands that Italy's claims should be satisfied.

Winston Churchill was without doubt, on the eve of the Second World War, the most vivid exponent of views critical of the "National" Government's foreign policy. Some authors maintain that he was almost the only sober-minded politician there was in the "appeasement" period. And yet even Churchill cannot be considered a consistent opponent of "appeasement". Two months before Hitler came to power he was laying it down that "the removal of the just grievances of the

vanquished ought to precede the disarmament of the victors". It was only after the re-militarisation of the Rhineland that Churchill came out firmly against "appeasement" of Germany. Though Thompson notes that "even afterwards he continued to hope that Hitler would settle down and become a good European".

The stand of the "anti-appeasers" was much weakened by their hostility to the USSR. There was not a single one amongst them free from prejudice and hatred for the Soviet Union, who would have been prepared to work together with the USSR on a basis of equality and mutual respect. This radically reduced the possibilities of counter-acting the policy of "appeasing" the aggressors.

Those who did not accept this or that manifestation of "appeasement" were still at one, in their class attitudes, with the "appeasers". The imperialist interests of Britain bound them all together. For this reason they could not go so far as outright confrontation.

The weakness of the "anti-appeasers" was expressed not only in their very small numbers (the number of Conservative Members of Parliament who officially opposed the government's foreign policy was never more than ten), but likewise in the fact that the House of Commons always, on every occasion, supported the government. Even at the most dangerous and shameful moment of all, when the Munich Agreement was debated, the government had the full support of Parliament.

The history of "appeasement" as a policy can be given a fairly precise periodisation. Its beginning can be placed in 1931, when Britain, France and the other powers refused to make use of the League of Nations and took no other measures, either, to halt Japanese aggression in Manchuria. Clement Attlee said in 1937, in Parliament: "The policy of this Government throughout, right on from 1931, has always been to try and appease the aggressor by the sacrifice of weaker States, but the more you yield to the aggressor the greater his appetite." The end of the first period can be seen in 1935, when Britain and France (the Hoare-Laval plan) wrecked the timid attempts made by the League of Nations to oppose Italy's war of seizure in Abyssinia. The second period, starting in late 1935 with the failure of the Hoare-Laval plan, lasted about three years. The Munich Agreement (autumn 1938) can be considered the culmination of that stage in the policy of "appeasement". The third stage lasted from

Munich until early September 1939, i.e. the beginning of the Second World War. Lastly, the period of the "phoney war" (up to May 1940) should be seen as a fourth period in the policy of "appeasement", although it took place under new and peculiar circumstances, Britain being already juridically at war with Germany.

The first acts of "appeasement" of the fascist aggressors were taken before Eden held senior office which might have enabled him to influence the government's foreign policy.

In September 1931 Japanese troops provoked military incidents (the aggressors were never too particular about the means used to find excuses for attacking their victims) with Chinese units in North-East China. Britain had very considerable interests in the Far East. Alexander Cadogan, in a paper for Cabinet use which formulated British interests in various parts of the world and sketched out lines of the foreign policy to be followed in view of the international situation, stated in October 1938: "British interests in China ... are considerable and are concentrated mainly in the hands of a not very numerous body of British individuals and concerns." But later on he stressed that their protection was not "intrinsically vital". Why the indifference to these interests? It was primarily due to the fact that Japan intended—and this comes from an official Japanese document—"having gained all the resources of China", and of several other countries in Asia, "to cross swords once more with Russia". And this, as British politicians saw it, was sufficient reason for "appeasing" Japan at the expense of China, even if British interests there were adversely affected. So from 1931 on Japan continued its seizure of Chinese territory with the connivance of Britain and certain other powers.

The Conservatives regarded Japan as "a guarantor of stability and order" in the Far East; she should be cooperated with in order to ensure the survival of the British Empire. Japan, said the Conservative *Saturday Review*, was "a force against Bolshevism in China and Revolutionary Nationalism in India". It stressed that "behind China ... stands Russia", and that "a modicum of good sense and clear sight should have taught the League to keep its fingers from between the hammer of Japan and the anvil of China". One is hardly surprised to find the journal concluding that "every school-boy knows that the only part of the Chinese Republic where

life and property are safe is where they are protected by Japanese bayonets".

John Simon's declaration in the House of Commons on this question in March 1932, according to K. Zilliacus, a Labour Member, "virtually assured the Japanese that they could go as far as they liked because, whatever they did or the Covenant said, Great Britain was determined not to lift a finger. That was in fact the way the Japanese interpreted British policy, and the events showed that they were right."

The various ways in which British (and American) ruling circles assisted Hitler's coming to power, in January 1933, should also be seen as a form of "appeasement" of the aggressive forces. The British press, especially Lord Rothermere's Conservative newspapers, carried on a propaganda campaign in favour of the transfer of power in Germany to the Nazis. In the autumn of 1930 Rothermere had already been talking of the many advantages that would accrue from the National-Socialists' assumption of political power, in particular the fact that it would provide a firm bulwark against Bolshevism. It would be best for the existence of Western civilisation, he felt, if in Germany a government came to power which was inspired by the same healthy principles that had enabled Mussolini to regenerate Italy in the space of eight years.

This was why a certain section of Britain's ruling circles, along with their sympathisers in the United States and in France, gave support to the Hitlerites when they seized power in Germany. It was their anti-Sovietism which prevented their seeing in good time that the hostility of fascism to Bolshevism did not exclude its also presenting a threat to the interests and security of other states.

This step forward in "appeasement" was followed by the next, and in this Anthony Eden was directly concerned. This was the work of the Geneva Conference on Disarmament, in the course of which Britain, the USA, France and Italy sanctioned the so-called "re-armament" of Germany.

Although in the twenties and early thirties not a single imperialist government had the slightest intention of disarming, the desire of the peoples to avert another war was so great that no one dared to come out officially against disarmament. This provides the explanation of the immense clamour of propaganda which was raised in the press during

those years with the object of representing the bourgeois governments as active fighters for peace.

Eden was commissioned to represent Britain at the League of Nations. His speeches at Geneva were widely publicised in the press. The papers were full of photographs of the young, elegant politician. In creating a popular image of Eden as a "supporter of disarmament" and a "peace-maker", the British bourgeois press was daily and hourly suggesting to its readers and to public opinion in the world at large the idea, in reality quite false, that British policy was directed towards securing disarmament and peace.

From this time dates the beginning of the gradual build-up of a quite inaccurate but persistent image of Eden as a pacifist, even as a supporter of collective security. The years went by, and this picture, created by propaganda and publicity, came to be less and less like the real Eden, the faithful and reliable executor of the British Conservatives' imperialist policy.

The British Government's partners at Geneva were pursuing analogous aims, and in consequence a regular, accepted mode of procedure was soon worked out. The representatives of the various countries would make, at the meetings of the League and its committees, interminable speeches which appeared to be pacifist in content, but in reality were calculated to drown the facts of a situation in a sea of words. Very soon the League of Nations was being referred to in many countries as "that talking-shop in Geneva".

One of Eden's contemporaries, Duff Cooper, who in the late twenties was Financial Secretary to the War Office, visited Geneva as a member of a British delegation. In his Memoirs he has this to say about the atmosphere reigning at the League of Nations: "The numbers of committees which talked interminably and accomplished nothing, which indeed never hoped to accomplish anything, the gossip of the cosmopolitan politicians, the huge dreary dinner-parties and receptions, created an impression of confusion and gloom."

On the other hand, contacts behind the scenes at the League, in the quiet, comfortable hotels and restaurants of Geneva and its picturesque environs, were used for the taking of diplomatic soundings and the conclusion of imperialist deals. The first steps by British policy along the road of "appeasement" were taken either at the League of Nations or in direct relation to its activities.

In 1932-1933 world attention was centred on the International Conference on Disarmament, which after long delays finally opened in Geneva on February 2, 1932. The peoples had great hopes on it. Their desire for disarmament and the preservation of peace reached its height at the time of this conference. At the very same time, processes were taking place in international relations which made the prospects for disarmament unreal.

The world economic crisis had considerably aggravated the contradictions between the imperialist states, and brought nearer the danger of war breaking out between them. In the Far East Japanese aggression against China was under way. The coming to power of the Nazis in Germany sharply increased the danger of war in Europe.

Yet some possibility of a constructive solution to the problem of disarmament still existed, even in those difficult conditions. A very great deal depended upon the position adopted by Britain, which undoubtedly played a leading role in the League of Nations.

There can be no doubt whatever that the people of Britain, the vast majority of them, were in favour of disarmament. Not a single historian who has touched on the disarmament question has been able to pass over in silence the wave of pacifism which swept Britain in the first half of the thirties.

British public opinion put forward the idea of Britain unilaterally reducing its armaments. Philip Noel-Baker, a Labour publicist who after the Second World War was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, published at that earlier time a book with the title *The Private Manufacture of Armaments*, in which he argued that actual disarmament by Britain "might well prove decisive in securing the adoption of a new policy by the world at large".

Responding to these feelings, the Labour and Liberal parties officially demanded that the government take definite steps towards disarmament at the Geneva Conference, and at the same time they voted in Parliament against increasing war expenditure. The anti-war movement in Britain in all its forms, including the return to Parliament of candidates standing in by-elections on a disarmament ticket, reached its highest point in 1933.

Underlying these expressions of British public opinion was not only pacifist feeling, the desire to achieve disarmament on an international scale, but also an understanding of the fact that arms in the hands of British imperialism were

always used for aggressive, reactionary purposes. The example of the First World War was still fresh in the memory of the ordinary Briton.

As soon as the Disarmament Conference opened in Geneva, the British delegation there received a flood of thousands of telegrams demanding that it ensure an agreement on disarmament. But there were other forces also at work in Britain, and it was they that determined government policy on disarmament. The historian W. N. Medlicott has called them the "conservative elements in society—businessmen, arms manufacturers ... imperialists, all professional soldiers above the rank of captain, members of the House of Lords with nephews in Kenya [i.e. connected with colonial exploitation—V.T.]".

It was these people who decided the actual position of the British Government on disarmament. Official British propaganda proclaimed, bearing in mind popular feeling at home and public opinion abroad, that the "National" Government supported general disarmament and was doing everything possible to ensure the success of the Geneva Conference. In actual fact the ruling circles of Britain had no interest whatever in the conference achieving any positive results, and it is they who bear the main responsibility for its failure.

The British Government made use of the Geneva Conference for its own diplomatic game, playing off one power against another (e.g. Germany against France) in order to increase its own primacy in European affairs. Major-General Temperley, a member of the British delegation, later recalled: "One felt a sense of shame that one was taking part in a colossal make-believe, that the people had not been told the truth."

The British delegation arrived in Geneva without any definite proposals to make. It was headed by MacDonald, the Prime Minister; Eden was deputy head of the delegation and in fact functioned as its leader. During the entire time of the conference's sitting, more than a year, that delegation presented nothing even remotely resembling a plan of action on disarmament. Month after month the conference remained in session, yet London was unable to work out any constructive ideas. Recalling that period, Eden later wrote: "I thought His Majesty's Government dilatory."

The Soviet Union, though not as yet a member of the League of Nations, had also been invited to attend the Disar-

ment Conference. The Soviet delegation arrived in Geneva firmly determined to attain an agreement on disarmament, and with a concrete plan of how it could be done. It submitted a plan for general and complete disarmament. In case such radical measures were unacceptable to other participants in the conference, the Soviet delegation declared its readiness to discuss any other disarmament proposals that might be advanced. For that eventuality it submitted a draft convention on proportional reduction of armaments. This was a clear and definite position, showing that the Soviet Union approached disarmament in a businesslike fashion.

The British delegation started its work by preventing acceptance of the Soviet proposals. This was comparatively easy for it to do, since Britain played the leading part in the League of Nations and at the conference (its President was a Briton, Arthur Henderson), and likewise because many delegations from the imperialist powers supported the British, having themselves no interest in real disarmament.

In October 1932 Simon, Eden and Vansittart, who was then Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, were working on a paper for the Cabinet defining the British attitude to Germany's claim for "equality of rights" in the matter of armaments too. This document produced no definite response from the Cabinet, and at the beginning of November Eden had to return to Geneva "without a single syllable of instruction or advice", as he noted in his diary.

Soon, however, the instructions came. And on the basis of these an agreement was arranged which recognised Germany's right to equality in armaments. Germany had been demanding the lifting of the restrictions set by the Treaty of Versailles on her armaments. Britain was in favour of meeting this demand. France was against. French statesmen realised that the growth of German armaments automatically lessened the security of France. The Berlin government threatened to leave the conference unless its demands were met. In the end German and British pressure, supported by the United States and Italy, obliged France to give way, and on December 11, 1932 a Declaration by these five powers was issued which recognised Germany's right to equality in armaments. Since this decision was not accompanied by any agreement on general disarmament, it was inevitable that it would stimulate universal arms race. Thus, thanks to the efforts of Britain and a number of other countries, the Geneva

Conference ceased to be a conference on disarmament and became a conference on armament.

The British Government pursued a quite definite line at Geneva. This involved, firstly, the wrecking of the Soviet proposals. When it had rejected the Soviet plans for disarmament, Britain and her imperialist partners went on to prevent acceptance of a draft declaration presented by the USSR which would have defined what was meant by "aggressor". Eden demanded "flexibility" when the facts of aggression were established, and declared that the question of who had first violated a frontier was of "secondary importance".

Secondly, the British position involved negotiating limitation of the armaments of other parties, while retaining her own intact. This was done quite simply and cynically. Admiral Pound insisted on the retention of battleships (the most important element in the Royal Navy) and the outlawing of submarines, which were a serious threat to British surface warships. The British generals were prepared to see the prohibition of heavy artillery and heavy tanks (Britain had neither), and were quite ready to agree to some limitation of the air force. "I had written to Baldwin," says Eden in his Memoirs, "...that since we were so weak in air power, any international limitations were bound to be to our advantage." At the same time, the British delegation objected to complete prohibition of bomber forces, which London needed to suppress the national liberation movement in the colonies.

The position of the British Government and its imperialist partners at Geneva, on another occasion five years previously, had been very well depicted in a speech by Winston Churchill, in what he called a "disarmament fable": "Once upon a time all the animals in the Zoo decided that they would disarm, and they arranged to have a conference to arrange the matter. So the Rhinoceros said when he opened the proceedings that the use of teeth was barbarous and horrible and ought to be strictly prohibited by general consent. Horns, which were mainly defensive weapons, would, of course, have to be allowed. The Buffalo, the Stag, the Porcupine, and even the little Hedgehog all said they would vote with the Rhino, but the Lion and the Tiger took a different view. They defended teeth and even claws, which they described as honourable weapons of immemorial antiquity. The Panther, the Leopard, the Puma and the whole tribe of

small cats all supported the Lion and the Tiger. Then the Bear spoke. He proposed that both teeth and horns should be banned and never used again for fighting by any animal. It would be quite enough if animals were allowed to give each other a good hug when they quarrelled. No one could object to that. It was so fraternal, and that would be a great step towards peace. However, all the other animals were very offended with the Bear, and the Turkey fell into a perfect panic.

"The discussion got so hot and angry, and all these animals began thinking so much about horns and teeth and hugging when they argued about the peaceful intentions that had brought them together that they began to look at one another in a very nasty way. Luckily the keepers were able to calm them down and persuade them to go back quietly to their cages." The Geneva Disarmament Conference reproduced Churchill's fable with amazing accuracy, except that there were no forces in the world capable of acting as keepers.

Eden's letters to London showed his growing alarm at the bad impression being created in Geneva by the conduct of the British delegation in criticising and rejecting proposals advanced by others, without itself proposing anything positive. This had been going on for over a year. Even the most naive observers could see that Britain did not want disarmament and was deliberately marking time in the hope that the conference would quietly fade away. Eden saw that all this was damaging British prestige, and wanted to do something to save the situation. He proposed that Britain should produce a detailed draft convention on disarmament and lay it before the conference, so as to avoid the accusation that Britain was responsible for the failure of the conference. "There seems to me to be only one course left to us," wrote Eden to Simon, "which ... would at least, whatever the consequences of failure, mark plainly to the world that we have done our utmost to achieve success." In London it was recognised that his alarm was well founded. Thus was born the idea that became the MacDonald Plan (as it was referred to), which for some reason or other received undeservedly extensive publicity.

The idea was made reality with incredible speed. What the Foreign Office and other Ministries had been unable to do throughout the many years of preparation preceding the conference, or during the first thirteen months of its sessions,

Eden and two other members of his staff—Alexander Cadogan and William Malkin—did in the course of one week-end in Geneva. An unbelievable time-schedule for elaborating a document such as an international convention on disarmament.

The document, once produced, was quickly printed, and on March 2, 1933 Eden and Cadogan took it to London. MacDonald, Baldwin, Simon, Vansittart, and the Cabinet's Foreign Affairs Committee with one accord approved it. It was decided that MacDonald and Simon should go to Geneva, in order to make the presentation of the draft as impressive as possible.

MacDonald and Simon arrived in Geneva on March 11. And at this point the whole undertaking nearly came to grief. The Italian representative at the conference, Aloisi, passed on to MacDonald an invitation from Mussolini to meet him in person. On March 14 Eden wrote in his diary: "Prime Minister highly delighted at idea of Rome visit and abandoning all idea of Convention [on Disarmament—V.T.]. After Aloisi had gone the Prime Minister and I had a talk alone. I told him I thought it would cause a most unfortunate impression if he left Geneva after a week with nothing even attempted... Eventually he agreed and admitted the conference must have some meat."

On March 16, 1933, MacDonald spoke at the Disarmament Conference, outlining his plan for solving the problem and presenting the British draft convention. His speech, according to Eden, "was criticized for rambling and ranting, but ... did the job". The so-called MacDonald Plan, which was really the Eden-Cadogan-Malkin Plan, was a medley of all the proposals previously made at the conference which were acceptable to Britain. That was why it had been so quick and simple to draw up. At the same time, however, a definite line could be traced running through it. The draft convention incorporated arguments for German re-armament, and gave Britain definite advantages over other countries in the matter of armaments.

Eden was faced with a thankless task: he had to enter into serious discussions with his partners on a document which had been cooked up and with much ballyhoo laid before the conference, not with the object of solving the problem of disarmament but as a move in the game of misinformation and propaganda to cover up Britain's negative attitude and relieve her of responsibility for the

rapidly approaching failure of the conference. The trouble was that the others understood very well the true meaning of the British "initiative". Eden just had to put the best face he could on things.

His partners at Geneva were first-rank bourgeois statesmen and diplomats of that period, men like Paul-Boncour from France, Neurath from Germany, Dollfuss from Austria, Aloisi from Italy, Beneš from Czechoslovakia, Titulescu from Romania, and the United States observer Davis. Eden learned a lot from them so far as bourgeois diplomacy was concerned. If later on he was considered a master at diplomatic talks, it is Geneva 1932-1933 which must be seen as the main school of his talents in this direction.

Immediately after presenting the British draft convention for the consideration of the conference MacDonald hastily departed for Rome to meet Mussolini. His departure was one more demonstration of London's negative attitude to the conference, showing that however hard the British press tried to advertise the MacDonald Plan even the British themselves did not take it seriously. The talks in Rome at once switched the attention of European diplomats from Geneva to Rome, and the MacDonald Plan was left almost unregarded. But the meeting between the British Prime Minister and the fascist dictator of Italy pointed to the true direction of British policy—reaching agreement with the fascist powers. In concrete terms, MacDonald hoped to achieve this by means of a Four-Power Pact between Britain (which was to play the leading part, of course), France, Italy and Germany. One of Eden's biographers, Dennis Bardens, notes: "It is ironic indeed that Hitler had no sooner crushed democracy in Germany than we were running after him, begging him to join forces with Mussolini in the Four-Power Pact."

Owing to French resistance the pact, signed in July 1933, was never ratified. It only took five years more and the clear road from the Four-Power Pact brought Britain and the other signatories to the deal made at Munich.

When the Prime Minister's notorious "pilgrimage to Rome" and the MacDonald Plan, presented to the Disarmament Conference, were debated in the House of Commons, these actions of the Cabinet were subjected to fierce criticism by Winston Churchill. He came right out against the idea of disarmament, saying flatly that disarmament conferences did more harm than good, and that one single such con-

ference had just cost the British taxpayer £ 40,000. Better for Mr. MacDonald to stay at home, he said, and concern himself with domestic affairs, than tinker with matters he did not understand. Foreign affairs should be left to envoys who had had the proper training and understood what was at stake. This declaration was made in Churchill's customary aggressive tone, reinforced on this occasion by his personal hostility to MacDonald.

And at this point Eden leapt to the Prime Minister's defence. It had already become second nature to him to stand up for his superiors, whether he liked their actions or not. The Old Guard of the Conservative Party, and Baldwin in particular, set great store by this quality in Eden. To be reliable and ever ready is a trait indispensable to a politician making a career. Pale and tense, according to one biographer, Anthony Eden rose to his feet to defend MacDonald. Looking straight at Churchill, he declared that the accusations made against the Prime Minister were "a fantastic absurdity". New times called for new methods. The trip to Rome was the "new method". It could help to bring France and Germany closer together, etc., etc.

Eden, in fact, was once again showing his loyalty. It is interesting to note that this sharply couched speech of his did nothing to spoil his future good relations with Churchill, for the battles of Parliamentary debate are often a kind of game.

As the international situation worsened, Eden's stock went up. For January 1, 1934, he got a fine New Year gift: his long-time dream was accomplished and he became a Minister, a member of the government. On the eve before Christmas MacDonald had summoned Eden and offered him the office of Lord Privy Seal. MacDonald offered the office without a seat in the Cabinet. Eden's responsibilities were to remain as they had been—to represent Britain at the League of Nations and deal with disarmament.

Eden under his new title was more or less attached to the Foreign Office as its second Secretary of State. Consequently Britain found itself with two Ministers dealing with foreign affairs—a "senior" one, Simon, and a "junior" one, Eden. Relations between the two were strained.

At this time Anthony Eden was only 36 years old. But the years had already given him a presence. His faultless elegance was everywhere noted by the journalists. Innumerable photographs of the young Minister filled the newspapers

in Britain and abroad. The whole world learned how well Eden dressed, and where he bought his hats and his ties. To the man-in-the-street he was the incarnation of aristocracy, and minor officials trying to make a career imitated him religiously.

Noblesse oblige, and Eden changes his London residence. He moves to a more imposing house, in Mayfair, near Hyde Park—the traditional quarter of the “top people”. The house was beautifully furnished and boasted footmen in red-and-blue livery. He had a bigger, finer room at the Foreign Office, too.

Watching the flood of publicity for Eden in the press, some political journalists were even then attempting to make a serious appraisal of this rapidly rising political star. Randolph Churchill, Winston Churchill’s son, then a young political commentator, published a long article on Eden in 1934. “The latest political fad,” wrote Randolph Churchill, “is the cult of Mr. Eden. He first leapt into international fame last summer when a French newspaper decided he was the best-dressed Englishman. Since then the political prophets and wiseacres have been tipping him as the next leader of the Conservative Party... He has a fine presence, a deferential manner, a courteous word for everybody, and unlimited patience and docility towards his elders. In addition, through his wife, he is connected with the powerful Beckett family, pundits not only of the Westminster Bank but also of the *Yorkshire Post*, that pillar of orthodox Conservatism. Many powerful individuals and groups are uniting at the moment in an effort to puff him. We are told how remarkable it is that such a young man should have attained such high office. Considering his limited abilities, it is remarkable... Mr. Anthony Eden has none of the qualities of youth... That is why he has been successful—but only by kind permission of the older men. His success will continue only so long as he continues to serve them.

“The old men are able to fob off young men of promise by saying: ‘Look at the splendid promotion we have given that young man, Mr. Anthony Eden’, knowing all the while that he is no menace to them...”

“The Anthony Edens will win every time, as the old gang will always encourage mediocrity rather than brilliance. Real ability will always be suppressed.”

The characteristics in Eden which Randolph Churchill described thus unkindly were without doubt important to

the Old Guard Conservatives controlling the government. No less important to them was the assurance that Eden shared their views, agreed with their political line, and would do all he could to further it. It was clear that in the not too distant future important decisions would have to be taken. And Eden justified their trust.

In December 1933 the British Government was already preparing for a fresh round of talks with Germany. By this time the "appeasers" had already achieved a large measure of "success". The business of a Four-Power Pact had gone ahead. In Geneva Germany's right to "re-armament" had been juridically formulated. In the MacDonald Plan Britain had officially proposed that sanction should be given to Germany having an army of 200,000 men, which meant repealing the appropriate clause of the Treaty of Versailles, under which Germany was not allowed to have more than 100,000 under arms, including both officers and men. But as soon as these concessions were made, the Nazis immediately announced that they needed an army 300,000 strong. Anxiety was aroused in Paris, and not without reason.

By this time it had become clear to people in Paris what they could expect when London began to speak of talks with Germany. As Eden notes, the French Government "feared that any discussions with the German Government would result in more concessions". French ruling circles realised that re-armament of a Germany ruled by men who had openly raised the banner of *revanche* harboured serious danger for France. Hence the objections from Paris to some of the British proposals—hesitant objections, not going the whole way, but enough to cause annoyance in London.

Over a period of many years British politicians had done their best to further British interests by egging on Germany and France one against the other. This trend was still being continued after the First World War. Eden writes of "the British tendency to help the weak against the strong ... which may only be an instinct for the balance of power"—the latter being one of the cardinal principles of British foreign policy. Britain sought to follow this principle with the object of putting herself in a position to act as arbitrator and ruling power in Europe.

In France in the early thirties there were some realistically thinking politicians who understood that the British game of maintaining the balance of power could end disastrously for France. Barthou, the French Foreign Minister,

realised this particularly clearly. He came out in favour of a Franco-Soviet pact against Nazi aggression, and for admission of the USSR to the League of Nations.

To put pressure on the French and to underline for the Nazis' benefit Britain's readiness to reach agreement with them on levels of armaments, London brought out a Memorandum which recognised what Eden refers to as "the inevitability of some German rearmament". In it the British Government declared once again that Germany should be allowed to have an army 200,000 strong; it was also proposed that she should be allowed to have tanks. To make these concessions acceptable to public opinion, the Memorandum stated that they were vital if agreement was to be reached on a convention that would control armament levels for a ten-year period. Re-armament to achieve disarmament—such was the logic of the British position. Fifty years on, the same logic will still be determining, in the second half of the 20th century, the position adopted by Britain in discussions on disarmament.

The Memorandum was debated in the House of Commons. This again put pressure on France, offered approving gestures towards Germany, and served to disorientate the British people. The proposals contained in the Memorandum were rational, declared Simon as Foreign Secretary, Germany must be assured of her right to "equality in armaments". He announced that Eden would soon be leaving to visit Paris, Rome and Berlin, in order to discuss the British proposals. Bardens remarks that "John Simon's speech reads as if some great gift were being offered to the British; how good of Messrs. Hitler and Mussolini to consider disarmament—this despite the fact that both countries were known to be arming to the teeth."

Eden spoke in the debate in the House, defending the Memorandum in its entirety. "We believe," he said, "that the general balance of the document is just, and therefore it should be maintained and not be departed from." In his Memoirs Eden makes no reference to this speech. And with good reason. As Bardens says: "The comments of Attlee and Cripps [the Labour spokesmen] ... were a warning to the House that 'appeasement' ... had already begun—as it had."

It may seem fair to ask whether perhaps there was no knowledge in London of Nazi Germany's intentions, and whether ignorance of this helped to produce the assistance

thus given to the practical realisation of those intentions? The documents make it plain that such was not the case. Just when the Memorandum was published, in January 1934, the British Government had received an important report from its Ambassador to Germany, Eric Phipps. The Ambassador reported that the regime which had replaced the Weimar Republic "might at some future date precipitate an international conflict, for Nazi Germany believes neither in the League [of Nations] nor in negotiation". Hitler's policy, wrote Phipps, had four aims: annexation of Austria, re-establishment of the eastern frontiers, expansion towards the south and east, and the recovery of some colonies. If Hitler found that he was arousing no real opposition, the pace of his advance would increase; on the other hand, if he were vigorously opposed, he was unlikely at this stage to risk a break. Eden himself admits that the Ambassador "thought Germany still sufficiently conscious of her weakness and isolation to be halted by a united front abroad".

So the British Government was excellently well informed of Hitler's aggressive plans, of the fact that these directly threatened Britain, and of the further fact that Hitler could be stopped if no more help was given him and a united front of states against aggression was formed. It is worthy of note that Soviet diplomacy made an analogous assessment of the situation in Europe, and proposed the same measures against aggression.

The British Government concealed its Ambassador's observations from Parliament and from the public, and continued to act in diametric opposition to them. Eden packed his bag to pay calls on Hitler and Mussolini. Why did London act thus contrary to common sense? Because British leaders were blinded by hatred of the USSR, and Hitler's plans included German aggression in the East.

On February 16, 1934, Anthony Eden set out on his first tour of European capitals as a British Government Minister. He was accompanied by Chief Foreign Office Adviser, William Strang, a capable, energetic and still young civil servant, who was a master at preparing drafts for documents and speeches of all kinds and who later made a brilliant diplomatic career; Parliamentary Private Secretary, Lord Cranborne, he inherited the title of the Marquesses Salisbury, one of the most influential families in England, then and now; Private Secretary, Robert Hankey, son of

the well-known statesman of that name. The party was seen off in style: John Simon came to the station, as did the French, German and Italian Ambassadors, and a personal representative from the Prime Minister. All underlining the importance which was attributed to the visit undertaken.

In the Nazi capital Eden was met with demonstrative warmth and ceremony. In the course of his conversation with Hitler they discussed the details of armament levels for various countries. The Führer, insisting on an army of 300,000 for Germany, was persistent in bringing up the "Soviet menace" to alarm the British Minister: "Russia must never be forgotten; if she is not a threat today she will be a terrible one tomorrow." The Nazis would for long continue to press this idea, in different variants, on the representatives of London, Paris and Washington, and these all would hasten to swallow the anti-Soviet bait, hook, line and sinker.

No specific agreements were reached, but friendly contact had been established. Hitler made a good impression on Eden. He came to a dinner at the British Embassy accompanied by Neurath, Hess and Goebbels. Eden revelled in the marked attention paid to him personally by the Nazi leaders.

That attention was simply explained. Eden was the first member of government from a Great Power who had come to Berlin to meet the Führer. His coming raised the prestige of the Nazi leader in the eyes of the German people and of the outside world. The moral and political gain to the Nazi regime was beyond doubt. And it was in these first years of its existence that the regime particularly needed such support, so some marked expressions of hospitality were a small price to pay. Before long the Nazis would grow arrogant, and would refuse to treat the emissaries of London and Paris with so much as common courtesy. But that was still in the future. Reading the letter which Eden wrote to Stanley Baldwin on February 21, one cannot help but be struck by his mistaken assessment of the Führer from the point of view of politics and subsequent Anglo-German relations, also by the sympathetic impression which Eden promptly formed of Hitler. "He [Hitler] is a surprise," we read. "In conversation quiet, almost shy with a pleasant smile. Without doubt the man has charm... I find it very hard to believe that the man himself wants war." In a letter to Simon we find Anthony stating: "Of one thing I am confident, the new Germany of Hitler and Goeb-

bels is to be preferred to the old of Bulow." And lastly, in a letter to MacDonald: "I think that we can trust the Chancellor [Hitler] not to go back on his word."

These feelings and judgements show Eden as being of the same spiritual and political family as those in Britain who later went down in history as the organisers of the "appeasement" of fascism.

In politics everything balances out in the final count. Assisting to raise the prestige of the fascist dictators had its counter-entry against London. The price of "appeasement"! Eden had his attention drawn to this by Daladier, the French Foreign Minister, who remarked that the British habit of bearding the lion in its den meant a loss of prestige for the visitor.

From Berlin Eden went on to Rome. This was his first meeting with Mussolini. The Italian Duce was supporting Hitler's demands on German armament. In Rome, unlike Berlin, the welcome given to Eden was cool: Mussolini did not attend a dinner given in his honour, and Eden left a day earlier than he had intended.

By and large, Eden's talks in Berlin and Rome produced no practical results. But they showed the British Government's readiness to move along the road of "appeasing" fascism.

On September 17, 1934, the Soviet Union entered the League of Nations. "The lead and drive [towards ensuring acceptance of the USSR as a League member—V.T.I.," Eden writes, "have, however, come from France, personified by her Foreign Secretary." Britain made no objection against the USSR becoming a member. On the occasion of the acceptance of the Soviet Union to the League of Nations Eden made a speech declaring that this would make the League more nearly universal.

This was not merely an act of formal courtesy on the part of the British Government. With every year that passed the Soviet Union was becoming a more and more mighty power. And though, as Eden notes, "Soviet military power was greatly underrated up to the hour of the German invasion", British politicians could not entirely discount "the Soviet card" in their diplomatic game. Watching the Franco-Soviet rapprochement with annoyance and dissatisfaction, those in London felt it was essential to leave the German Government not quite sure that agreement between the USSR and Britain was an impossibility. They argued that

it could on occasion be a good thing to scare the Germans with the idea of a possible agreement between Britain and the USSR, just to make the Germans more amenable. Hence the British support for Soviet membership of the League of Nations, and some other acts which will be mentioned later.

The year 1935 was full of major international events. It was a very important year for Anthony Eden too. His name became a daily and accustomed sight not only in the British press, but world-wide. It was amazing how his popularity grew. He never put forward controversial ideas, he created no precedents by any of his actions, his speeches had no bite. As Bardens so picturesquely puts it, where Churchill "called a spade a spade", "Eden would perhaps describe it as 'an implement with which all of us, no doubt, are familiar'". Yet oddly enough, notes Bardens, the world saw him as a fresh and energetic young man, not yet disillusioned, a welcome contrast to the insincere academism of John Simon, the self-satisfied complacency of Baldwin, the intrigues of the swarthy-faced Laval, the boastful ranting of Mussolini and the threats of Hitler.

One must be fair, though, to the young Minister—he was very hard-working. He worked himself to the point of exhaustion and never took time off. His constant travels left him little time to spend with his family. His wife referred to herself as "a diplomat's widow". He had two sons growing up: Simon, born in 1925, and Nicholas, born in 1930. Sometimes the Edens and their children went to stay with their relatives at Warwick Castle or at Windlestone. But the former glory was departed. Windlestone was no longer maintained in apple-pie order as it used to be. Eden's father had died. His mother had aged, and occupied her time with charitable works.

When Eden was detained in London on business he would go to his study in the evenings to be alone and do some reading. But often the "red boxes" would arrive with documents from the Foreign Office (these resembled the attaché cases now in fashion) and his book would have to be laid aside. On the rare evenings when he was free Eden would visit his club. This was of course the Carlton Club, whose members are Conservative MPs and would-be MPs. There the conversation would be with colleagues, and inevitably about politics. If there was a chance to go to the cinema, Eden would choose a comedy, but more often than not

Beatrice had to go without her husband. On Sundays the family would attend church. Anthony would listen attentively to the words of prayer that he knew by heart.

Eden was fond of sport, especially tennis at week-ends. In Geneva he would get his secretaries out of bed at 7 in the morning to play a game of tennis before the meetings began. However, there was no regular pattern of action. Working in foreign affairs meant constant travel, and Eden spent a considerable portion of his time in transcontinental railway carriages.

At the beginning of 1935 Eden was once again on his travels round the capitals of Europe. These visits were dictated by a British governmental decision to try and get a general agreement concluded with Nazi Germany in the very near future. As the policy of "appeasement" proceeded, a regular order of events was established as follows: each concession to the aggressive power was followed by new, ever more far-reaching demands from the latter; "appeasement" produced results the opposite of those intended.

In January 1935 the Saar region, which was under League of Nations mandate, was returned to Germany following the result of a plebiscite. As British representative at the League, Eden was directly concerned with this. Broadcasting from Geneva on January 18, he declared that "the League of Nations may justifiably be congratulated upon the peaceful discharge of its anxious responsibility [for the Saar]". Strange matter for congratulation. May it not be connected with what the British Ambassador Phipps had written a year earlier: "Once the Saar had returned to the Reich, Hitler's objective would be a rectification of the eastern frontiers and expansion southwards and eastwards."

Following the return of the Saar to Germany, two weeks had not passed before Eric Phipps reported to London: "I feel it my duty to warn you that the result of the Saar plebiscite has been to render Herr Hitler more independent and the omens less propitious for the success of any negotiations with this country." The British Government reacted to this report by speeding up its measures to reach agreement with Germany.

On February 3, 1935, a joint Anglo-French communique was issued in which both governments refused to recognise Germany's right to depart unilaterally from the Treaty of Versailles, i.e. its right to re-arm without their permission, and at the same time proposed that Germany should

reach agreement with them on "general settlement" of issues. This was a proposal to replace the Treaty of Versailles by a new, broad agreement.

The German Government informed the British that it would prefer to have talks with them on a bilateral basis—the traditional Nazi tactic of splitting its enemies in order to weaken their position. But bilateral talks suited the British very well, for their dream was of an Anglo-German agreement, veiled by the participation of some other countries. It was agreed that Simon and Eden should go to Berlin on March 11.

At the same time, the British Government decided to put some pressure on the Germans to make them more amenable. This is a tactical ploy frequently used in diplomatic talks. The pressure was to take the form of a demonstrative establishment of contact (no more) with the Soviet Union. It was announced that from Berlin Eden would go to Moscow, which caused no great reaction in Berlin, where they were well aware of the true attitude of the British Conservatives to the USSR.

On March 4 a government White Paper was published in London, which proposed that an additional £10 million (a trifling sum) be spent on building up Britain's Armed Forces. The necessity of such a measure was motivated by German re-armament that could create a threat to peace. Berlin replied by announcing that the British emissaries' visit was to be postponed, since Hitler had a cold. A classic case of the diplomatic illness!

But the worst was still to come. On March 9 the government in Berlin announced that Germany now had a Luftwaffe, and on March 16, that compulsory military service was being introduced, and that a regular army of 36 divisions, totalling 550 thousand men, was in formation. Hitler was brazenly and unilaterally tearing up the Treaty of Versailles. The Nazis were taking for themselves that which the London politicians were preparing to grant them as the outcome of a "general agreement". The Nazis took this action in full confidence that they would get away with it completely—Hitler had learned the lesson from the policy of "appeasement". Even if he did have any doubts on the matter, British ruling circles took the trouble to dispel them in advance. *The Times* published a letter from a well-known "appeaser", Lord Lothian, which censured the White Paper and justified the actions of the German Government. Stan-

ley Baldwin declared in the House of Commons that the blame for the arms race should not be laid on Germany alone. An idea correct in itself, but expressed in such a way as to give support to the Nazis.

Soon the question arose: what was to happen about Simon's and Eden's postponed visit to Hitler? Eden wrote later that Berlin should have been told that since the Germans had unilaterally torn up their obligations on the eve of the visit, the latter was therefore pointless, and to be postponed indefinitely. But the "appeasers" were stubborn folk—they had had their eye spat in, but pretended not to notice. And the British Cabinet decided: to make a protest to Berlin about defiance of treaty obligations, and ... to go ahead with the Simon-Eden visit.

Lewis Broad has this to say on the subject: "The French were taken aback. British sympathizers on the Continent were distressed. Did the Foreign Secretary not realize what damage he was doing to waning British prestige? The very logic of the situation seemed to require that Britain should decline to seek any new agreement with the Leader of a state who did not honour the signature of his predecessors... Did Hitler still want the visit?—it was superfluous to ask. What more could he have hoped for at that moment? A British visit to Berlin must in the circumstances imply tacit consent to German treaty-breaking. The fact of the visit was sufficient for Hitler's purpose. He affably consented to receive the visitors."

But their reception was far from courteous. Hitler refused to agree to the British proposal that Germany should return to the League of Nations, reiterated his intention of building up an army half a million strong, a Luftwaffe and a navy, and presented his visitors with territorial demands, expressed in threatening if muted tones, affecting Austria, Czechoslovakia and Memel. He further demanded the return of Germany's former colonies. Any talk of a Central European or Eastern European pact was brushed aside: the Nazis did not want their hands tied. The Führer accompanied all this with insistent warnings of the "Soviet threat".

Hitler's demands reduced Simon and Eden to confusion. They were prepared to "appease" aggressors, but not quite to that extent, and certainly not at the expense of British interests. Summing up his impressions of the Berlin talks, Eden wrote in his diary: "Result bad ... whole tone and tim-

bre very different to a year ago, rearmed and rearming with the old Prussian spirit very much in evidence."

At an official dinner in honour of the British emissaries the talk turned to the First World War. It emerged that in March 1918 Eden and Hitler had been on the same sector of the front, opposite one another. They drew a map on the back of a dinner card "which I still possess, signed by both of us", wrote Eden in 1962. After the dinner the French Ambassador, François-Poncet, asked Eden whether it was true that he had been opposite Hitler. "I replied it seemed so. 'Et vous l'avez manqué? Vous devriez être fusillé!'"

From Berlin Simon returned to London, while Eden went on to Moscow—to establish contact.

From the point of view of diplomatic protocol it was far from unimportant which of the British Ministers went to Moscow. Even MacDonald, according to Eden, "thought it wrong that two Ministers should go to the German capital and one to Moscow... On the face of it, there was something in this, but the Russians made no difficulty." True, the Soviet Government was concerned enough about collective security to ignore petty provocations on the part of its enemies.

During the Cabinet meeting at which the Moscow trip was discussed, Stanley Baldwin passed a note to Eden with humorous suggestions of what he would need to take with him to Moscow. The list included: two dozen bottles of whisky, two dozen siphons of soda water, a case of dry champagne, tinned sardines, tinned corned beef and tinned vegetables...

On more than one occasion it has been demonstrated that propaganda sometimes forms the views not only of those for whom it is intended, but of those who are issuing it. Politically this is very dangerous, since it leads to a false estimate of the opponent. Of course it was not of serious importance that the Conservatives thought they had to take their own carrots and soda water to Moscow. But when they gave themselves a false idea of the power of the USSR, it led to a number of major miscalculations.

On March 27, 1935, Eden left Berlin by special train, on his (to use his own words) "leprous journey". He was tired, he tried to read the textbook of Russian which his wife had provided for the journey, but he soon gave that up. At the frontier a special Soviet train awaited him. Much

later Eden recalled the comfort in which he had travelled through Soviet territory, and the menu provided in the restaurant car, something which completely contradicted the forecasts of Stanley Baldwin.

None the less, when Eden does recall his first visit to Moscow, he splutters over anything and everything. He does not like the way he was met at the station, he does not approve of the way the British flags had been made, he even complains about the sky over Moscow. "The dismal two-mile drive from the station to the Embassy left a lasting impression upon me," he says. "Large, drab crowds... The weather, the streets, the people, all seemed grey, sad and unending." The British Minister's prejudice and hostility towards the USSR would not let him see the Soviet capital and its people in their true light. Only the Kremlin, which is clearly seen from the British Embassy building on the Sofiiskaya Embankment, appealed to Eden: "Elegant in its lovely soft rose colour, there are few more beautiful sights in the world."

Present at the talks, along with Eden, were Strang, Chief Foreign Office Adviser, who took detailed notes of the proceedings, and Chilton, the British Ambassador to the USSR. On the Soviet side the spokesmen were J. V. Stalin and M. M. Litvinov.

The talks soon got down to business. Eden reported to his government that the Soviet representatives had an excellent grasp of international affairs. Later he had to admit that the prognoses they made on the prospective development of international relations were considerably more accurate than the assessments formed by the British Government.

Eden raised the question of sanctioning the re-armament of Germany to a definite level. He was told that the Soviet Union did not consider it possible to permit legalisation of German armaments. It was explained to him that it was not a matter of correcting injustices in the Treaty of Versailles, but of German preparations for aggression. These were two quite separate things. "We cannot close our eyes to the fact that Germany is re-arming in order to attack," the Soviet leaders declared. "We must therefore take measures now to prevent Germany re-arming herself!"

Eden tried to convince his opponents that they were exaggerating Germany's aggressive intentions. The answer given him was that the Soviet Government had no slightest

doubt as to Germany's aggressive intent, since German foreign policy was inspired by two ideas—that of revanche, and that of domination in Europe. Less than five years were to pass before life demonstrated the entire correctness of this assessment.

It was very well understood in Moscow that British politicians wanted to instigate Germany to attack the USSR. So Eden was warned that anyone relying on this might get his fingers badly burned. "At present," he was told, "it is too early to say in which direction Germany intends to aim her blow first. In particular, it is quite possible, more probable even, that the first blow will be struck not against the USSR... In general, Hitler is trying, by putting expansion to the East in the forefront of his propaganda, to hook the Western states and get them to sanction his armaments. When those armaments reach the level Hitler desires, the guns may start firing in quite a different direction." History showed how exact that forecast too was.

Eden was not left in ignorance of the interpretation put in the USSR on the British policy of "appeasement". On the one hand, there was Germany with her plainly aggressive intentions. On the other, there was a number of states attempting to halt Germany. Britain, by not wishing to support these attempts, was *ipso facto* giving support to Germany.

In his talks with Soviet leaders Eden behaved with extreme caution. When he was due to meet Stalin alone, he was concerned to make sure that he had a witness of his own present at the conversation. And this is why: "I knew that there were colleagues at home who were against the visit and against me, too, for that matter, and I wanted his [Chilston's] authoritative witness to my words."

In the course of this talk J. V. Stalin asked Eden whether he considered the present European situation more alarming than the situation in 1913. Eden replied: "I would use the word 'anxious' rather than 'alarming'. The existence of the League of Nations, of which every European power but Germany is a member, is an advantage of importance which we lacked before the war." Stalin replied: "I agree on the value of the League, but I think the international situation is nevertheless fundamentally worse. In 1913 there was only one potential aggressor, Germany. Today there are two, Germany and Japan." Eden was to sum up the matter thus: "Future events were soon to justify these words."

At the end of the visit a joint communique was agreed upon. British diplomats make it a rule to draw up, whenever possible, their own document and get it accepted as the basis for subsequent discussion. This is held to have certain advantages. This occasion was no exception. Eden brought along a draft communique. The Soviet side proposed a number of amendments, and the discussion was prolonged. It continued even in the intervals at the Bolshoi Theatre, where Eden was seeing the ballet *The Three Fat Men* on his last day in Moscow, and practically up to the last minute before the departure of the special train taking the British representative back from Moscow. This lengthy discussion over the text of the communique was only natural. Such documents are always the product of compromise, and the parties concerned have to decide how much compromise is, for them, admissible.

Historians have since remarked on the pithiness of the communique as finally issued, and how well it compared in this respect with the majority of such documents. The communique noted that at that time there was no conflict of the interests between Britain and the Soviet Union on any of the main issues of international policy, and that this fact provided a firm foundation for the development of fruitful cooperation between the two countries in the cause of peace. Both countries undertook to govern their mutual relations by the spirit of cooperation, in particular in the common efforts for establishing an organisation to maintain collective security and peace.

Diplomatic communiqués reflect the real positions of the parties issuing them in varying ways. They are capable of expressing with precision the actual interests and intentions of the parties, but they may also leave a lot unsaid, i.e. not indicate fully the intentions of the parties on certain questions. And lastly, such communiqués sometimes state more, for tactical reasons, than the signatories intend to perform. The criterion, which will indicate to what extent the theses of a communique represent reality, is provided by the acts of foreign policy undertaken by the governments concerned.

Viewed in this light, the communique on Eden's visit to the USSR in March 1935 reflects quite precisely, it must be admitted, the position of Moscow, and does not correspond to the true position of London.

The Soviet Union did indeed consider that it had no radi-

cal differences with Britain, but British ruling circles held that the very existence of a socialist state ran counter to the vital interests of their country. The Soviet Government wished to cooperate with the British Government in the creation of a system of collective security, while the British Government by its policy of "appeasement" of the aggressors was thwarting the efforts of the Soviet and other governments which wished to take collective measures to preserve peace. The culmination of "appeasement" was Munich. If Moscow wished to be guided, in its bilateral relations with Britain, by the spirit of cooperation, London's policy was characterised by consistent hostility towards the USSR, which brought Britain eventually, at the beginning of 1940, to the decision to start a war, jointly with France, against the Soviet Union (this was prevented by events over which the British Government had no control).

Let us admit that London, in sending Eden to the USSR, had strictly limited aims—to discover the mood of Moscow, and to show the Germans that Britain might choose to improve its relations with the USSR. Even so, the visit had considerable significance. It was an indication that the international weight of the Soviet state had increased to the point where even British Conservatives could not help but take it into account. The talks enabled the Soviet side to expound once more to the British Government and, to some extent, to world public opinion also, the Soviet Union's peace-loving foreign policy concept.

The talks with the Soviet leaders made a strong impression on Eden. On his return from Moscow he said that whatever may be thought of the experiment being conducted in Soviet Russia he had never been in any country which was so fully occupied with work at home for many years to come.

Eden's visit denoted a certain shift in Soviet-British relations. But the attitude towards the USSR then prevailing in the British Government prevented realisation of the possibilities which the visit opened up. In Britain at that time it was the almost universal opinion that Soviet military might was disorganised and of low quality. This was a clear case of blindness induced by one's own propaganda having serious political consequences. But the warnings given to Eden in Moscow on the dangers of the British Government's line in foreign policy fell, as they say, on deaf ears. The policy of "appeasement" went on.

Subsequently, when history had established the unwisdom

of Britain "appeasing" Nazi Germany and maintaining hostility to the USSR in the thirties, Eden tried to make use of his Moscow visit as a means of touching up his own political portrait. This is the aim pursued in the section of his Memoirs dealing with his first visit to the Soviet capital. David Carlton remarks in this connection that readers of his Memoirs "might be led to suppose that in the mid-1930s Eden was much more well-disposed toward the Soviet Union than most of his colleagues in the British Government. The reality may have been different. True, he was not a vocal public critic of the Soviet Union in this period... But in private his views differed little from those of Baldwin, Neville Chamberlain and other supposedly more anti-communist colleagues... It was not until 1939 that he showed any marked enthusiasm for close cooperation with Moscow—a change of mind."

From June 1935 the membership of the British Cabinet was to be somewhat different. The "National" Government was re-shuffled. The Labour man MacDonald and the Liberal Simon were replaced by Conservatives: Baldwin became Prime Minister officially as well as in practice, and Samuel Hoare became Foreign Secretary.

This re-shuffle affected Eden very feelingly. When re-organisation of the government first began to be talked of, he had no doubts that the Foreign Office portfolio would be given to him. Having waited for some time for the proposition to be put to him, he then decided to raise the matter himself. Eden went to Baldwin and asked that he should not be left as "second string" to another Minister at the Foreign Office, adding that if the worst came to the worst he would be prepared to take the Admiralty. Baldwin promised to think about it. A little later Eden was rung up by Maurice Hankey, Secretary to the Cabinet, who congratulated him on getting the Foreign Office, which, he said, was a settled thing. When later the same day, in the House, Baldwin touched Eden on the shoulder and said they must have few words together, Eden was sure he knew what about. One can imagine his disappointment when he heard that Hoare was to be Foreign Secretary, while he, Eden, was being asked to remain at the Foreign Office as Minister for League of Nations Affairs, with a seat in the Cabinet. Eden started to protest but, as he himself recalls, Baldwin "in spite of our friendship ... thought me a little unreasonable... 'After all ... it isn't everyone who has the chance to be

in the Cabinet before he is thirty-eight.' " There was nothing Eden could do but agree to it.

Actually it was not Baldwin's fault that Eden's dream had not as yet come true. It was Neville Chamberlain that was coming to carry more and more weight in the Conservative Party leadership. He insisted that Hoare, who had proved his worth at the India Office, should be given the Foreign Office. Another very influential personage, Geoffrey Dawson, Editor of *The Times*, also put in his word for Hoare. The upper echelons of the Conservatives considered that Hoare would be better at carrying through the policy of "appeasement" than would Eden.

Ten days after the formation of the new Cabinet Britain, without informing France beforehand, signed an agreement with Germany under which Germany was to be allowed to build a fleet equivalent to 35 per cent of the total tonnage of the navies of the British Commonwealth of Nations, and maintain a submarine fleet of tonnage equal to the entire tonnage of the Commonwealth's submarines. These provisions rescinded the corresponding clauses in the Treaty of Versailles. If previously Germany had unilaterally broken that treaty, she was now doing so in concert with Britain.

Although Eden had taken no part in the talks dealing with German naval strength, he was given the job of going to Paris to reassure the alarmed government of France. Eden tried to convince Laval, the French Foreign Minister, that all the actions of the British were in the interests of France as well as of Britain, but he did not have much success. On June 21 he telegraphed a message to London that the Anglo-German Naval Agreement was being viewed negatively in Paris.

It is in this period that Eden makes his second "pilgrimage to Rome", the visit to Mussolini which marks the beginning of the next stage in British "appeasement" of the Italian aggressor. Over a number of years Italian fascism had been preparing to seize Ethiopia (Abyssinia), an independent state in North-East Africa. After an armed clash, engineered by Italy on the border between Ethiopia and Italian Somaliland, it was clear to world public opinion that Italy would soon start full-scale war against Ethiopia. Both countries were members of the League of Nations. Settlement of the conflict was thus the direct responsibility of the League. It was clear that if even now the League

took no effective measures against the aggressor, it was signing its own death warrant and would cease to have any international authority whatsoever. Nevertheless, the ruling circles of Britain were so anxious to develop and strengthen their collaboration with Mussolini that they immediately came out on Italy's side, in spite of the fact that Italy's seizure of Ethiopia would obviously damage British positions in that area.

The British press did all it could to slander Ethiopia and provide excuses in advance for fascist brigandage. *The New Statesman*—a Labour weekly—stated that Abyssinia was a “barbarous” country. The Conservative *National Review* wrote that Britain had “great interests in Europe and it is important to us ... that Italy should not be weakened by colonial difficulties”. Lady Houston, the owner of another Conservative journal, the *Saturday Review*, telegraphed Mussolini to say: “English patriots present their homage to Mussolini, the greatest patriot in the world—for his aim for Italy is to build up and achieve... English patriots hope Mussolini will stand fast and damn the League of Nations—which only exists to enable Russian Bolshevism to destroy civilization.” “Many right-wing Conservatives,” Thompson notes, “shared Lady Houston’s general sentiments, though they hesitated to express them in such categorical terms.”

And the position of the government itself? At a conference in Stresa in April 1935 MacDonald and Simon had offered Mussolini tacit agreement to his aggression against Ethiopia. A second encouragement to the Duce was the speech made in Parliament by Hoare as the new Foreign Secretary. He urged MPs to dismiss from their minds the rumours, altogether without foundation, that Britain intended, together with the French Government, to resort to certain measures against Italy, “a country which has been our friend since the Risorgimento”.

Being anxious to satisfy Mussolini, the British Government thought up the following plan: Ethiopia cedes part of its territory to Italy, and in return for this Britain gives Ethiopia access to the Red Sea, carving a corridor for this purpose through the territory of British Somaliland. This was the plan Eden was commissioned to discuss with Mussolini.

On June 23, 1935, Eden arrived in Rome. Hard as he tried, he was unable to persuade the Duce to agree to the British proposal. The fascists needed the whole of Ethiopia,

not part of it. Their intentions were clear and definite. "If I have to resort to war to achieve my ends," Mussolini told Eden, "my aim will be to wipe the name of Ethiopia from the map."

Eden, distressed by the failure of his mission, discussed the results of the meeting with the British Ambassador in Rome, Eric Drummond, and they came to the conclusion that a report must be sent to London, and those in London "would now have to determine their course between upholding the League and losing an ally [Italy, that is], or undermining the foundation of peace in Europe". Eden's Cabinet colleagues unhesitatingly chose the second course.

But when Eden reported publicly to the House of Commons on his rendezvous with Mussolini, he indicated in general terms the proposals made by the British Government to Italy, but said nothing—according to his own account of the matter—about Mussolini's demands. Once again, as on how many previous occasions, we see public opinion being misled! Parliament is told of proposals which have already lost all meaning, while the essence of the matter is left unspoken.

Yet British public opinion was profoundly alarmed by the growing threat to peace—Japanese aggression in China, the coming to power of the Nazis in Germany, the collapse of the farce with disarmament, and the loudly publicised Italian preparations to attack Ethiopia. A large number of pacifist organisations held a Peace Ballot. Its results were announced on June 27, 1935: 11 million Britons had voted in favour of British participation in the League of Nations, and for reduction of armaments. The vast majority said they were in favour of economic sanctions, and if necessary military sanctions, being applied to aggressors. It was an impressive weight of opinion demanding of the British Government that it support the League of Nations, put up an effective fight against aggression, and take part in collective measures to preserve international security. This in itself was an outright condemnation by the British people of the policy of "appeasement".

These attitudes on the part of the broad masses of the population caused especial alarm to the Conservatives because a General Election was due very shortly. At this stage the government, in order to maintain themselves in power, organised a political deception of grandiose dimensions.

Before he left for Geneva, where discussion of the Italo-

Ethiopian conflict was due to take place, Eden was given no clear instructions. He found himself in a difficult position: on the most important problem then facing the League of Nations, he had to make do with vague, ambiguous statements.

And in Geneva everyone was waiting for a clear formulation of London's position. "Avenol, the Secretary General," Eden writes, "told me that almost every delegate had instructions to follow the British lead. Litvinov, who was in the chair, suggested to me privately that the Council as a body should declare that it was prepared to carry out its obligations under the Covenant." All Eden could do was avoid giving a straight answer to such approaches. "I am simply dreading these conversations," he frankly admitted, writing to one of his Cabinet colleagues, Ormsby Gore.

The vague declarations made by the British were a great surprise to the Italian representative at the League, Aloisi. He told Eden that in Rome no one had expected that London would take up such a stance. They had good reason to be surprised, on the basis of quite recent factual evidence. When the unarmed Ethiopia, under threat from an Italy armed to the teeth (the British had earlier been supplying it with arms), sent a request to London for the supply of small arms at least, that request was refused.

There then took place an event which surprised many. Samuel Hoare arrived in Geneva to speak at the League of Nations. When Eden saw the text of his speech in advance, he was amazed: Hoare was proposing to take up a radically anti-Italian position. Eden wanted to suggest some alterations to make the Foreign Secretary's speech less unequivocal, but Hoare set them firmly aside, saying that Baldwin and Neville Chamberlain had studied the text of the speech very carefully, and approved it.

On September 11 Hoare solemnly declared to the Assembly of the League of Nations that "the League stands, and my country stands with it, for the collective maintenance of the Covenant in its entirety, and particularly for steady and collective resistance to all acts of unprovoked aggression". The conflict between Italy and Ethiopia, he said, was no exception.

The Peace Ballot vote against the government's policy was turned into one in favour of that policy. But that was not the biggest lie in Hoare's speech. The main trick emerged later.

Thompson writes: "It is fairly clear that the National Government's decision to give unqualified support to the League was prompted by the public mood as expressed in the Peace Ballot and by the fact that a General Election was due before November 1936." This assessment is shared by many bourgeois historians both in Britain and abroad. It is confirmed by a confidential conversation between Neville Chamberlain and Leopold Amery, which the latter recorder in his diary thus: "We were bound to try out the League of Nations (in which he [i.e. Chamberlain] does not himself believe very much) for political reasons at home... There was no question of our going beyond the mildest of economic sanctions such as an embargo on the purchase of Italian goods or the sale of munitions to Italy... If things become too serious the French would run out of things first and we could show that we had done our best." Just in case Mussolini might, unlikely though that was, take Hoare's speech literally, i.e. as indicating a change in Britain's foreign policy line, Hoare sent the Duce "a friendly personal message", as Eden informs us. In the light of these facts it is hardly surprising that A. J. P. Taylor describes the actions of the British Government at the League of Nations in September-October 1935 as "a triumph of hypocrisy".

Hoare's speech changed the mood of the British voters in favour of the Conservatives, and a General Election was called for November 14, 1935. In its election manifesto the Tory Party swore it was faithful to the League of Nations, assuring all that "in the present unhappy dispute between Italy and Abyssinia there will be no wavering in the policy we have hitherto pursued". Thus suggesting to the electorate that their policy so far had been to restrain aggressors.

The big lie worked. The Conservatives won 387 seats in the House of Commons. These, plus those of supporters, gave them a majority of 247 Parliamentary votes. The Labour Party was able to get only 154 Members of Parliament returned. The election of 1935 gave the Conservatives power for the next ten years in effect.

Eden was "the man of the hour", making great play in his speeches with the hopes which the Conservatives pinned on the League of Nations. In the eyes of the public he symbolised active British resistance to aggression through the League of Nations. This suited the Conservatives very

nicely: Eden was their man, and his merits were grist to the Tory mill.

At a ceremony when Eden was given the freedom of the borough of Leamington, Stanley Baldwin was among those present. In his speech on this occasion Eden said: "It is fashionable for politicians to look forward to retirement—to pigs, poultry and a pot of ale by the hearthside [this with a kindly smile for his leader Baldwin]. I promise to allow myself no such indulgence. We are all moving into an era when nations will strive to understand one another. Through the League alone can we hope to create in the World that new order as a result of which no nation would ever contemplate for an instant the use of war as an instrument of national policy. We are ready at all times to play our part in the maintenance of peace..." In Britain political life has its own rules. Eden was saying what he knew his audience wanted to hear.

Hoare's speech did not, naturally, stop Mussolini, nor was it intended to. On October 3, 1935, Italy attacked Ethiopia. On the very same day a telegram was received in London, from the English envoy in Addis Ababa, saying that the first bombs the Italians dropped fell on a building containing medical stores and equipment, and flying the flag of the Red Cross. The League of Nations, with the active participation of the Soviet delegation, passed a resolution recording that Italy had broken her obligations under the Covenant of the League, and recommending member states to apply economic sanctions against Italy. Eden assisted in the passage of this resolution.

Since the Parliamentary election was only a month away then, the British Government was pursuing three lines: firstly, it did all it could to postpone the date when the sanctions were to come into effect, in particular being obstructive over the establishment of an embargo on oil exports to Italy; secondly, it worked to retain the possibility of direct negotiation with Mussolini; thirdly, it prepared a compromise agreement which would satisfy Italian fascism at the expense of Ethiopia. For this last purpose Maurice Peterson, head of the Abyssinian Department of the Foreign Office, was sent to Paris in late October, to work out with his French opposite number the conditions of a compromise. This was the groundwork for the future Hoare-Laval agreement. The main part of the work was done in Geneva, where Eden was actively concerned.

When the Parliamentary elections were over, the search for peaceful ways of "appeasing" Italian fascism was stepped up. Eden held a consultation at the Foreign Office to prepare instructions for Peterson. The latter, carrying on talks in Paris with Laval, from time to time asked London for instructions, and Eden provided them. The plan produced by Peterson and his French colleague Saint-Quentin received preliminary approval from the British Government.

At the beginning of December Samuel Hoare, on his way to a holiday in Switzerland, stopped off in Paris and together with Laval accepted this plan, which provided for the dismemberment of Ethiopia and its transference, for all practical purposes, to Italian rule.

But events followed which had not been intended by the British Government. Laval, eager to get in ahead of his British accomplices so far as collaborating with Mussolini was concerned, let a leak of information take place, and the provisions of the Hoare-Laval plan appeared in the newspapers.

The French Foreign Minister had also wanted to ensure himself and deprive the British Government of any chance of going back on the agreement. But the result of the leak was quite different. International opinion was outraged. Just previously the British had been rejoicing over the firm stance taken up by their government towards Italian aggression, less than a month before they had voted for that government in the election because they saw it as supporting the League of Nations and providing a firm bulwark to defend any victim of aggression—and now they learned that that same government was selling poor unfortunate Ethiopia to Italian fascism. So the speeches of the British representatives at the League and the election speeches of the Conservative leaders were premeditated perfidy? The Conservatives had duped the voters, and the British Government had tricked world public opinion? These were the questions that faced every Briton. Conservative Members of Parliament were overwhelmed by thousands of indignant letters and queries from their constituencies. The indignation among representatives of the various countries at the League of Nations was no less profound. And lastly, the British Dominions expressed their dissatisfaction in no uncertain terms. The Baldwin Government found itself facing a crisis.

The Conservative leaders were afraid that many Back-

Bench Conservative MPs, under pressure from their constituents, would vote against the government. That threatened them with having to resign. Baldwin was aware that the Back-Benchers only needed a leader having authority and they would come out against the government. There were two such potential leaders—Winston Churchill and Austen Chamberlain. Luckily for Baldwin, Churchill was abroad: he would certainly not have missed the opportunity to try and get Baldwin out. In order to neutralise Austen Chamberlain, Baldwin had a word in his ear: "Austen, when Sam [i.e. Hoare] has gone, I shall want to talk to you about the Foreign Office." This bid to buy Austen Chamberlain off proved successful.

Hoare (who had contrived to break his nose badly while skating in Switzerland, had been summoned urgently to return to London and was now recovering in bed) was asked to resign. He was made the scapegoat.

On December 91 there was a stormy debate in the House of Commons. Attlee moved a vote of no confidence in the government, and declared that not only the honour of Britain, but that of its Prime Minister was in question. Then Austen Chamberlain intervened, noting that whatever differences of opinion there may be among the Conservatives as to this action or other of the government, the challenge to the Prime Minister's esteem must be turned down unanimously by them all. So Austen Chamberlain had swallowed the bait dangled before him by Baldwin and came to the rescue of the government which he hoped to join very shortly. The debate ended in acceptance of a motion which rejected the Hoare-Laval plan and reaffirmed the support of the House for the policy of the Conservative election manifesto.

The next day Baldwin, as promised, called Austen Chamberlain in for a talk about the Foreign Office. But what was the latter's surprise when the Prime Minister started explaining to him that as the Foreign Office had broken down men like Hoare and Vansittart, the man in charge of it must have "iron nerves". Nothing could be more terrible for a man, Baldwin assured him, than to prove unfit for his work without himself becoming aware of it. It seemed doubtful whether Austen Chamberlain would be able to bear the heavy load of responsibilities the Foreign Office would lay on him, and hence no one would believe that his appointment could be more than temporary.

After this promising introduction, Baldwin asked what Chamberlain himself thought about it. He replied: "If that is your opinion, it is conclusive."

Austen Chamberlain felt he had been shamelessly cheated. And it was less than tactful of Baldwin to go on to ask him what he thought of Eden as a candidate for the post. Chamberlain merely enquired whether Baldwin thought Eden's health was equal to the strain.

Meanwhile Eden was on board a train from Geneva to London. At Calais the British Consul gave him a request from Baldwin—to go and see him at Downing Street immediately upon arrival in London, and to see no one else first.

When Eden appeared, Baldwin asked him whom he could recommend to be Foreign Secretary. Eden named Austen Chamberlain—whatever he may have thought privately at the time, the decencies had to be observed. Baldwin replied that Austen was no good, he was too old. Then Eden suggested Halifax. Baldwin rejected him too—on the grounds that he sat in the House of Lords, and the Foreign Secretary ought to be in the Commons. In the end, Baldwin told Eden: "It looks as if it will have to be you." Eden recalled later that the turn of phrase did not please him—it seemed he was being offered the job only because there was no one else to do it better.

Baldwin spoke only part of the truth so far as Halifax was concerned. The point was that Halifax was known as a consistent "appeaser". And in this hour of crisis Baldwin needed to demonstrate to the country his supposed faith in the League of Nations and in collective security, and his readiness (again, supposed) to stand out against the aggressor. Eden's reputation met the requirements fully. It was that which got him the ministerial portfolio for Foreign Affairs.

The Labour *New Statesman* called his appointment "the best Christmas present the Prime Minister could have given us". Meaning that Eden was a statesman on whom the hopes of the people could be pinned and who, unlike the others, would carry out the policy which the people wanted. That was exactly the reaction to Eden's appointment which the government needed; they were trying to get public opinion calmed down after the Hoare-Laval deal, and to get that incident forgotten.

The newspapers fell over one another to assure their readers that now everything would be different, there would

be a fresh start. "His promotion," *The Times* asserted, "answers accurately to the requirements both of public opinion and of last Thursday's debates in both Houses. In another respect the clearly expressed wishes of the House of Commons are being carried into execution. With Mr. Eden's appointment the Government can go forward again..." The same sentiments were echoed by the semi-official organ of the Conservatives, *The Daily Telegraph*: "The very circumstances out of which the vacancy unhappily arose marked Mr. Eden out as the most appropriate and reassuring choice. He is a strong League of Nations man... Hence his appointment ... should reassure all those whose confidence was shaken by the Paris Agreement."

And yet the reality was very different from the burden of these ecstatic utterances. In reality Eden bears no less responsibility for the government's policy, including the deal over Ethiopia, than any other member of the Cabinet. The precise facts are now available to show that on the issue of the war between Italy and Ethiopia there were no differences between Eden and his Cabinet colleagues. These facts show that he bore, indeed, even more guilt for what had occurred than did many other members of the government. Let us recall that he played a part in working out the "compromise" which was embodied in the Hoare-Laval agreement; that he organised the presentation at the League of Nations which misled the League itself, world public opinion and the British people, regarding the true British position over Italian aggression: the false hopes thus raised of curbing the aggressor were nullified by the Hoare-Laval deal, and the result was that the League was utterly weakened, and the actions of fascist Italy made very much easier. And lastly, it is Eden personally who bears responsibility for a telegram sent to the Emperor of Ethiopia Haile Selassie (through the British envoy in Addis Ababa) in which the British Government demanded that the Emperor accept the Hoare-Laval plan. This telegram was sent at the time when Eden was in charge of the Foreign Office during Hoare's absence in Switzerland.

And Eden's arrival to take command at the Foreign Office was far from signalling any change of course in British foreign policy, any abandonment of "appeasement" of aggressor powers. A. J. P. Taylor writes: "Eden took Hoare's place as Foreign Secretary. The Hoare-Laval plan disappeared. Otherwise nothing was changed... Compromise was

still in the air; another version of the Hoare-Laval plan waiting to be produced."

The League of Nations was never to recover from the blow dealt it by the British and French Governments through the production of the Hoare-Laval plan. It continued to hold sessions for some time yet, the speeches poured forth, but the faith of nations and governments in the League as an instrument for preserving peace and security soon faded away. Such was the end of the first stage in the policy of "appeasement", which brought with it, for Anthony Eden, the Foreign Secretaryship.

Chapter III

FOREIGN SECRETARY IN A GOVERNMENT OF "APPEASERS"

Anthony Eden became Foreign Secretary at the age of 38. A rarity in British political life that such an important post should be entrusted to one so young. Eden's feelings on the subject were contradictory. Of course he was immensely happy to have thus achieved his main objective. Yet at the same time Eden could not help but understand that a great responsibility was falling on his shoulders at a very difficult moment. The situation was very involved both at home and abroad.

The government was discredited in the eyes of the electorate. British people felt that the Conservatives had used sharp practice to hoodwink them at the recent elections. The personal authority of the Tory leader and Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin, was badly damaged, for it was he who had been the main organiser of the great deception.

International faith in the British Government had also been badly shaken. Not very long ago, 50 countries at the League of Nations had answered its call to stand against Italian aggression and squeeze the aggressor with sanctions. But a few weeks later that same government had entered into a shameful deal with that aggressor, thus demonstrating that its assurances of adherence to the principles of the League of Nations had been pure hypocrisy. Could one rely upon such a government's word? One could not, it was dangerous to do so! As the British envoy in Belgrade reported, the Hoare-Laval plan had caused "British prestige in Yugoslavia to slump to zero".

Relations with France, far from warm even earlier, had clearly deteriorated: the British Government, in abandoning the deal made with Laval, had done its French associates a very bad turn.

The chances of Britain being able to intervene in the Italo-Ethiopian war and arrange a "compromise" advantageous to herself now looked extremely poor. Since British

prestige had fallen sharply, Mussolini was now less inclined to pay heed to opinion in London, since he calculated that he could attain his ends without British collaboration. So Britain could no longer count on gaining any advantage by acting as the "honest broker".

Mussolini's success, the weakened position of the League of Nations, the failure of attempts to organise a system of collective security, wrecked by the intrigues of the British and French Governments—all these went to strengthen the positions of Nazi Germany and to stimulate aggressive acts on her part. Under these conditions it was a stiff assignment to guide Britain's foreign policy.

But the factors complicating Eden's position were not limited to international difficulties. In the British Cabinet real power commonly belongs to a small group of politicians forming the so-called "inner Cabinet". The Foreign Secretary, in view of the importance of his post, is always one of this group. But not in Eden's case. The "old men" made use of his popular name, but did not allow him real power.

The "inner Cabinet" included, besides Baldwin, the Chancellor of the Exchequer Neville Chamberlain, the Home Secretary John Simon, and the Lord Privy Seal Halifax. Baldwin was favourably disposed towards Eden, but was not interested in foreign policy and so could not support him actively. The other three were not too enthusiastic about Eden's popularity and his rapid rise to office. Simon, furthermore, remembered very distinctly the friction there had been between himself and Eden when Simon had been in charge of the Foreign Office. Halifax had ambitions to hold the Foreign Secretaryship himself, and thought that Eden had grabbed the post over his head. From time to time Halifax was commissioned by the Cabinet to deal with jobs touching on foreign affairs, and while the Foreign Secretary was away he looked after the Foreign Office. The "old men" were giving Halifax the chance to gain experience of foreign affairs just in case it might be necessary to find a replacement for Eden. All the members of the "inner Cabinet", in fact, thought they understood matters of foreign policy at least as well as Eden. Eden relates in his Memoirs that it was common at Cabinet meetings for a multiplicity of Ministers to "show their initiative" and take a hand in drafting diplomatic despatches on this or that issue under consideration. About a year after his appointment Eden made a vigorous protest against this practice. His patron Baldwin

thereupon passed him a note saying: "Don't be too indignant. I once saw Curzon burst into tears when the Cabinet was amending his despatches." The analogy could hardly have been a great consolation to Eden...

The guiding concept of foreign policy, which the government had been following for years, and Eden along with it, did not change, naturally, when he became Foreign Secretary. As presented for popular consumption, it was based on the idea that Britain was too weak militarily to resist the aggressive designs of Germany, Italy and Japan, and must therefore make major concessions by means of which the above-named countries might be induced to agree to a new settlement, which would then replace the Versailles-Washington system. Under such a new settlement British interests must of course be looked after to the utmost, so any concessions to the aggressors must be at the expense of third countries.

From the false premise that the countries opposed to the aggressors had insufficient strength to restrain aggression was drawn the "logical" conclusion that agreement with and concessions to the aggressors were unavoidable. "The sort of ignorant rot," writes Randolph Churchill, "which was the common parlance at this time of people like Baldwin, MacDonald, Chamberlain, Hoare, Simon, Halifax and Eden, and *The Times* newspaper, was to the effect that any firm stand anywhere would automatically produce a war for which we were ... unprepared." Such "common parlance" was of course inevitably relayed to the dictators and naturally encouraged them to further demands. "Baldwin's phrase that 'sanctions that would be effective inevitably spelled war' was much circulated in every defeatist corridor, *salon* and saloon. This sort of stuff was day by day elegantly dished up in the columns of *The Times*."

The British man-in-the-street failed to notice how in the Parliamentary debate on the Hoare-Laval plan Baldwin not only declared that "these proposals are absolutely and completely dead, and this Government is certainly not going to make any attempt to resurrect them", but added: "This is the last time we will allow the Government to commit itself with regard to collective security." Austen Chamberlain promptly stressed that talks seeking a compromise solution should be continued—a compromise better than the one Hoare had produced. So it was still a matter of carrying on the old policy of "appeasement".

Yet the anti-aggression forces were capable at the time of restraining the aggressors. This is vouched for by the readiness of the USSR to take part in collective security measures, also by the desire of many member states of the League of Nations to prevent a new world war (the League decision on Italy's attack on Ethiopia showed this most convincingly).

An important question arises here: what did the new Foreign Secretary think on this issue? And the answer is quite definite: he agreed with the foreign policy line of his government. "Both Press and public," writes Dennis Bardens, "welcomed his appointment hoping it would mean an end to drift. Actually, this was an illusion... Eden continued as the willing servant of the Government, loyally fulfilling his responsibility ... committing himself to nothing without the most careful consultation with the Ministers concerned."

The young politician realised perfectly clearly that he would remain Foreign Secretary only as long as he continued loyally to serve his party. During his years of political life, which might be comparatively few but had been packed with events, he had learned how to serve loyally, and did so with obvious satisfaction, all the greater for his being by nature a man destined to play supporting roles, to put other men's plans into practice.

Very soon after his appointment to his new eminence Eden is writing a number of papers for internal, governmental use, which indicate his political line very clearly. "On balance, however," he concludes, "I am in favour of making some attempt to come to terms with Germany... We should be prepared to make concessions to Germany, and they will have to be concessions of value to her if they are to achieve their object, but these concessions must only be offered as part of a final settlement which includes some further arms limitation and Germany's return to the League." What is this, if not a classical example of a programme for applying the policy of "appeasement" to Nazi Germany? And Eden probably felt this himself, remarking as he does in his Memoirs: "I had by this time occasionally used the word 'appeasement' in a speech or minute for the Foreign Office." A very significant admission.

The first act of "appeasement" of the aggressors carried through by Eden as Foreign Secretary was to ensure the non-interference of interested parties when Nazi Germany

re-militarised the Rhineland. All the bourgeois historians, and even Eden himself, admit that the "appeasement" line taken towards Italian fascism by London and Paris had convinced Hitler that now, in early 1936, his moment had come, that he could send in his troops and re-militarise the Rhineland without fear of opposition by Britain or France. This was an outrageous contravention not only of the Treaty of Versailles, but of the Locarno Treaties as well.

On March 7, 1936, Germany moved troops into the Rhineland, taking them right up to the French border.

Realising that if Paris and London moved to defend their treaty rights (and they ought to have done this for juridical reasons and following the dictates of plain common sense), then Germany would have to capitulate immediately, the Nazis threw out a bait for the governments of Britain and France. They offered to sign a 25-year non-aggression pact between Germany and France and Belgium, also bilateral pacts of non-aggression with Germany's Eastern neighbours (but not with the USSR), and to return to the League of Nations. It was stressed that the action in the Rhineland also had an anti-Soviet element, being taken as it were in response to the Soviet-French pact on mutual assistance.

The German action was unexpected so far as world public opinion was concerned, but not unexpected to the British Government. Its Ambassador had repeatedly reported from Berlin that such an action was in preparation. At the end of January 1936 Eden had a noteworthy conversation with the German Foreign Minister von Neurath, who had come to London with the German delegation attending the funeral of King George V. Even as related by Eden after the war, this conversation looks distinctly odd. Eden showed interest in German intentions regarding the provisions of the Locarno Treaty (which would *ipso facto* include those relating to the Rhineland being kept as a demilitarised zone), and was content with some vague utterances by Neurath on the absence of disputed issues between Germany and France. It is extremely significant that the British Minister did not warn the German that Britain had an interest in maintaining the provisions of Versailles and Locarno regarding the Rhineland, and did not say that Britain would not allow them to be infringed. Such an omission, when the threat of German infringement of these articles was in the very air, was equivalent to tacit acceptance of the German action then being prepared.

The next day Eden was visited by the French Foreign Minister, Flandin, who immediately raised the subject of the Rhineland. His purpose was to find out what Britain's position would be if Germany brought troops into the Rhineland. Eden avoided giving a straight answer to that question. Although Britain, like Italy, was a guarantor of the Locarno Treaty and consequently had to secure the *status quo* on the Rhine, Eden declared that the situation in the Rhineland "was clearly a matter for the judgement of the French Government in the first instance".

As the French Foreign Ministry was putting the same question to the British Ambassador in Paris, George Clerk, Eden gave him strict instructions to tell the French nothing about the possible British position. It grew clear that the British Government was washing its hands of the matter in advance.

And the formulation of the British Government position given by Eden in a note of February 14, 1936 for his Cabinet colleagues was quite unequivocal: "It would be preferable for Great Britain and France to enter betimes into negotiations with the German Government for the surrender on conditions of our rights in the zone while such surrender still has a bargaining value."

Baldwin and Eden discussed the situation and decided that London would not support any French military action against Germany. The fact that this refusal would in itself be contrary to Britain's obligations under the Locarno Treaty apparently did not worry the august persons conversing. And when the question of Anglo-French staff talks came up, Baldwin warned Eden of their unpopularity among the Conservative Back-Benchers: "The boys won't have it."

The British Government, Parliament, the press, all put much effort into justifying Germany's aggressive acts in the eyes of the British public at large, depicting those acts as entirely reasonable and proper. "After all, they are only going into their own back garden!" exclaimed Lord Lothian. Harold Nicolson, a well-known observer of foreign affairs and a Member of Parliament, noted in his diary: "On all sides one hears sympathy for Germany."

The press played up to Hitler, publicising his proposals in such a way that the reader should accept these as a genuine contribution by the Nazi Führer to the preservation of peace. *The Spectator* wrote: "The essential is to get discus-

sion started on Hitler's positive proposals." While *The Times* asserted that re-militarisation of the Rhineland presented governments with a chance to re-build the international relations of Europe.

This "chance to re-build" was openly linked with anti-Soviet policies. "Nothing in Herr Hitler's peace proposals," remarked *The Spectator*, "...is inconsistent with the theory that Germany wants peace in the west with a view to freeing her for action in the east." Robert Boothby, a Conservative MP, put things even more clearly, dotting all the i's. "Some people," he said, "...advocated unlimited concessions to Germany in the hope that 'a day will come when we shall get the Germans and the Russians fighting each other'."

The moral and political support for German actions was accompanied in the British press by anti-French propaganda. This was probably done because Hitler's act threatened French security primarily, and the French Government was expecting London to meet its obligations under the Treaties of Versailles and Locarno. French strategic positions had been undermined—a vivid lesson to British ruling circles, and their answer was to unleash savage resentment against France. There was another reason too for the outburst of Francophobia in Britain. For a number of years, Eden writes, "some of my colleagues were to protest that our close relations with France prevented us from reaching an understanding with Germany". In short, the British Government was not averse to making major concessions to Nazism at the expense of French interests.

Yet France at this juncture had every right to say: "We are putting troops into the Rhineland," and to demand that Britain do the same. This was Britain's direct obligation under the Treaties of Locarno. In London they were very much afraid of this situation arising. It was not a French defeat they were frightened of—the French army could at that time have dislodged the Nazi forces from the banks of the Rhine without trouble. What frightened British ruling circles was the possibility of the German gamble in the Rhineland coming unstuck and bringing down the Nazi regime in Germany, after which left-wing forces might have come to power.

Harold Nicolson, well informed on the mood of Parliament and government, confided to his diary that if Britain and France decided to evict the Nazi troops from the Rhineland

by force of arms they could of course do so successfully and enter Berlin. "But what is the good of that?" he asked. "It would only mean communism in Germany and France." So Nicolson considered that the only course open to Britain was "to swallow this humiliation as best we may, and be prepared to become the laughing-stock of Europe".

On March 7 the German Ambassador in London, von Hoesch, presented to Eden a Memorandum on the bringing of German troops into the Rhineland. It was a Saturday. The Prime Minister had gone off the previous day to spend the week-end at his out-of-town residence, Chequers, some 60 kilometres from London. At week-ends official activity practically ceases.

Eden was thus obliged to take up a definite position without having any previous consultation with either Cabinet or Prime Minister. He summoned the French and Italian Ambassadors and the Belgian Chargé d'Affaires (for different times, but in that order), and announced that the French Government should "not do anything to make the situation more difficult". If Eden, who was far from being given to taking independent decisions, made such a weighty pronouncement, it could mean only one thing: the British Government had already decided on its position, which amounted to non-intervention vis-à-vis Hitler's aggressive act. At the same time, Eden recommended to the French Ambassador's attention Hitler's counter-proposals, stressing that these "would have a very considerable effect on public opinion". He was directly playing along with the Nazis, who had put out their counter-proposals with the intention of disorientating and demoralising their opponents. Only after this did Eden ring up Baldwin, drive to Chequers, and report on the situation to the Prime Minister. The latter approved all the actions taken.

It is noteworthy that on March 9 there was a debate in the House of Commons on defence. This debate offered a prime opportunity to say something also about the bringing of German troops into the Rhineland—after all, what happened there related very directly to the security and defence of Britain. But the Prime Minister contrived to speak without even mentioning the events that had taken place two days previously.

Could the governments of Britain and France check Germany and force her to remove her troops from the Rhineland? Yes, they could. They had the necessary strength

and resources, not to mention the fact that the Soviet Union had from the first taken up a firm position calling for rebuff to the aggressor. On March 9 the Soviet Embassy in London informed the British that in the opinion of the government of the Soviet Union "the only proper response to Hitler would be to reinforce collective security by all possible means, including such measures of compulsion as the League of Nations might see fit to take against Germany".

The Soviet Union, at this juncture, proposed a realistic means of restraining the aggressor and ensuring security and stability in Europe. It called for close cooperation between the USSR, Britain and France. On April 2, 1936, as the official documents show, the Soviet Government brought to the attention of the British Government that for the salvation of Europe "it is imperatively necessary that the USSR, France and Great Britain draw as close as possible in the struggle for peace". Moscow stressed that "only urgent reinforcement of a system of collective security, ready to act decisively in reply to each new aggressive action of Germany, can bring Hitler to realise that peace holds more advantages than war".

So in London they cannot have been in any doubt as to the position of the Soviet Union. But British ruling circles remained deaf to the voice of common sense. They decided to act in a very different way.

In a note composed for his Cabinet colleagues Eden wrote that it would be in British interests to come to a far-reaching settlement with Germany, for as long a period as possible, while Hitler was still in the mood to do this. The British Cabinet approved Eden's proposal. So in spite of everything the line was still to work for a general settlement with Nazi Germany. And to attain this the "appeasement" of Germany must continue, and the first thing to be done for that purpose was to legalise Hitler's action in remilitarising the Rhineland.

But what about the French? Would they swallow, unresisting, this marked worsening of their strategic position, would they not try to restore the previous *status quo*? In order to avert such a possibility, Eden and Halifax hastily left for Paris.

In commenting on this trip, some of Eden's biographers have interpreted the fact that Halifax was brought in for this assignment as an indication that Baldwin and the "old

men" had insufficient faith in their young Minister. While entrusting to him such an important mission—involving a decision on peace or war, no less—they none the less saw fit to set a watch on him in the person of a member of the "inner Cabinet". Despite all his popularity both in Britain and abroad, Eden had much less influence in the "inner Cabinet" than Halifax.

Eden and Halifax were successful in getting their line accepted in Paris at a conference of the Locarno powers. Eden succeeded in defending the same line again at a session of the League of Nations Council, which met in London from the 14th to the 17th of March to consider the complaint lodged by France and Belgium against Germany that the latter had violated the Treaties of Versailles and Locarno. The Council recognised the fact that Germany had violated the treaties, but did no more. No support was forthcoming for the speech made by the Soviet representative, who unmasked the aggressive foreign policy designs of Germany and declared the Soviet Union's readiness "to take part in any measures which the Locarno powers might propose to the Council of the League" and which "would be acceptable to the other members of the Council". No measures were in fact proposed. This was mainly due to the efforts of the British representatives.

Having thus ensured, in effect, legalisation and support of the German action, the government in London decided it was now proper for the matter to be debated in Parliament, since they had no cause to fear undesirable repercussions.

Only after 19 days had elapsed since the relevant events did the House of Commons get down to debating the situation caused by the re-militarisation of the Rhineland. By this time the German troops had not merely established but had thoroughly strengthened positions on both banks of the Rhine. The Commons debate was opened by Eden. He declared that the aim of the British Government in the current situation was: "First, to avert the danger of war, second, to create the conditions in which negotiations can take place, and third, to bring about the success of these negotiations so that they may strengthen collective security." Later "a happier atmosphere" was to be created allowing the "larger negotiations on economic matters of armaments which are indispensable to the appeasement of Europe to take place". How far removed from true intentions were these words!

In fact, the British Government thought to remove the threat of armed conflict with Germany from itself by organising Germany's attack of countries to the east of her. Which is not, by any means, the same as "averting the danger of war". Actually Britain did not avert the danger even for herself, she merely increased the brunt of the war she was faced with only three and a half years later. In the opinion of an English historian, Charles Webster, it was the re-militarisation of the Rhineland that made the future war inevitable. The assertion that the deal about to be made with Hitler was to "strengthen collective security" is a typical example of British political hypocrisy, for the policy of "appeasement" was the very antithesis and negation of the policy of collective security. The same applies to the words about the "appeasement" of Europe, used to mask the line towards the "appeasement" of the fascist states.

The House of Commons, including its Labour group, on the whole approved of the theses advanced by Eden. Contributors to the debate supported these by further remarks to the effect that no sanctions should be taken against Germany, and that the French should be warned not to count on British support if they tried to remove the German troops from the banks of the Rhine by force of arms. This last point was categorically laid down by Neville Chamberlain, who wound up the debate for the government.

There was rejoicing in Berlin. One more risky venture by the Nazis had come off, the political and strategic positions of fascism had been made more secure. Later A.J.P. Taylor was to note that "...7 March 1936 was 'the last chance', the last occasion when Germany could have been stopped without all the sacrifice and suffering of a great war". That she was not stopped was the fault of the British Government. Randolph Churchill summed up the actions of that government regarding the re-militarisation of the Rhineland as follows: "We had passed another milestone on the road to war, down which we were all ... being shepherded by Baldwin, MacDonald, Chamberlain, Hoare, Simon, Halifax and Eden."

Italian fascism also took advantage of the favourable situation. Mussolini pressed on with his brigand's business, hastening to conquer the entire territory of Ethiopia. The Italian Blackshirts did not hesitate to employ the most bestial methods of warfare. Poison gas was used. Italian planes deliberately bombed hospitals.

Meanwhile the efforts of the British Government were being turned towards preventing closure of the Suez Canal to Italian shipping, and towards hindering, by delaying tactics, the application of oil sanctions against Italy. The old line of currying favour with the fascist dictator was still in operation.

As early as January 6, 1936, when Eden had just received the ministerial portfolio, he was assuring the Italian Ambassador that there was no foundation whatever for press reports that he was anti-Italian, and still less was it true that there had been "any sharp personal differences" between himself and Mussolini; he ended by expressing his readiness to collaborate with the Duce.

On May 5 Italian troops occupied Addis Ababa, and soon they occupied the whole of Ethiopia. Haile Selassie went into exile in Britain, where he was received worse than coolly.

This course of events brought forward once again the question of sanctions against the aggressor. And here the British Government showed remarkable energy in obtaining the repeal of the economic sanctions against Italy, which had been introduced by the League of Nations. It was undeterred by the fact that the sanctions had been introduced at the instance of Britain, that they were supposed to stop aggression but had not done so, and that in proposing to repeal them London was making a right-about face in its policy.

On May 6 Austen Chamberlain called for the repeal of the sanctions in the House of Commons. A month later Neville Chamberlain declared in the course of a much publicised speech to the 1900 Club that the continuation of sanctions seemed to him "the very midsummer of madness".

Then Eden came into the game. It was he, who had the reputation of a supporter of the League of Nations and who had earlier had a part in its decision to apply sanctions, who now on June 18 announced and "explained" in the House of Commons the British Government's decision to lift sanctions against Italy. For years he had been making any number of speeches in praise of collective security, but now he came out openly against measures directed towards achieving that end.

He even brought out the hoary argument that sanctions would lead to war, which will not be confined to the Mediterranean area only. This was sharp practice, as he must

have known, since in December 1935 the governments of Turkey, Greece and Yugoslavia had given assurances that they would support Britain should Mussolini engage in "a 'mad-dog' act", i.e. respond to sanctions by declaring war on Britain. Faced with such a combination of powers, with the other members of the League of Nations behind it, not even a "mad dog" would have taken such an action.

The indignation of the Labour representatives in the House of Commons was expressed by Greenwood, who said that this was "betrayal" of the League. There were cries of "Shame!" and "Resign!" from other Members. The Labour Party published a manifesto under the title "The Great Betrayal". Here was the true face of Anthony Eden at last exposed.

In the Europe of the mid-thirties there was a growing movement of the Popular Front, the peoples' answer to the onslaught of fascism in a number of countries and to the increasing danger of another war, also to the policy of "appeasement" of aggressors being followed by the governments of Britain and France. The petty bourgeoisie, the intellectuals and some bourgeois-liberal groupings united round the working class. In 1936 parliamentary elections brought Popular Front governments into power in France and in Spain. This was in itself a severe check for fascism. In July 1936 monarchist-fascist reactionaries, plus the military caste, raised a rebellion in Spain against the lawful government. From the very beginning the rebels worked in the closest collaboration with German and Italian fascism. Support for the fascist rebels soon grew into direct military intervention by Germany and Italy against the Spanish Republic.

The ruling circles of Britain and France found themselves in a difficult situation. Victory for the rebels and those intervening to help them would represent a grave danger to their own countries. Their interests in the Mediterranean and in North Africa were under threat. Victory for fascism in Spain, helped on from outside, would make Spain a natural ally of Germany and Italy against Britain and France. The security of the British base at Gibraltar and of the entire sea route through the Mediterranean to South-East Asia would be placed at the mercy of the fascist powers. And France would find herself gripped in the pincers of hostile forces—from the direction of the Rhine, from her Alpine frontier and from the Pyrenees.

At the same time, defeat of the fascist revolt in Spain and preservation of the Popular Front government there would mean a sharp reduction in the strength of reactionary forces in Europe as a whole and within Britain and France in particular, and would bring about a significant strengthening of left-wing forces. This the ruling circles of these two countries could not allow. Class interests clearly determined the conduct of the British and French Governments in relation to the Spanish fight for revolution and freedom. Both London and Paris preferred to support fascism against true democracy, to the detriment of the interests of their own peoples. "Appeasement" of the fascist powers was being transformed into direct support of aggression committed by them within the continent of Europe. T

In justification of such an attitude, it was alleged that any other course of action with regard to events in Spain would entail a general war throughout Europe. The premise was not new. The "appeasers" were already accustomed to using the bogey of war to scare their peoples into accepting their policy. We have already met with this line of argument, used to ensure non-intervention in Italian aggression in Ethiopia.

Yet this concept is refuted by events connected with the Spanish war itself. In 1937 Italian submarines began to sink neutral merchant shipping, including British vessels, in the Mediterranean. This underwater piracy threatened British naval interests in the Mediterranean, as well as the rights of other countries. In connection with this, an international conference took place in September 1937 at Nyon on Lake Lemman; it took just 48 hours to reach agreement on measures to be taken against the fascist pirates. The results were immediate. Italian submarine attacks on merchant shipping came to an end. The measures involved had not only failed to produce any threat of war, they had helped to keep the peace.

The British Conservatives are artful politicians. They devised a means of supporting fascism in Spain which was accepted by many politically inexperienced people as an expression of neutrality with the regard to events in Spain. An agreement on non-intervention in Spanish affairs was drafted, which was signed by 27 countries. This agreement prohibited the export or transit of weapons and war materials to Spain. At first glance it appeared to offer the Spanish people the opportunity to settle their own problems

independently, without outside intervention. But this was just a façade, masking an underhand way of helping on the suffocation of the Spanish revolution.

In the first place, this was a crude infringement of international law. In the House of Commons in October 1936 one MP, Adams, pointed out that "the Spanish Government has not even enjoyed the elementary right in international law of purchasing arms from abroad". In the second place, by debarring the Spanish Government from foreign sources of arms, at a time when the fascist rebels were being supplied with German and Italian weapons, the policy of "non-intervention" was in reality providing a handy solution of the problem of how to assist the fascists in strangling the Spanish Republic. In this way "non-intervention" in Spain was all of a piece with the embargo on the supply of arms to Ethiopia which the British Government had operated during the Italo-Ethiopian war a year before. Now London took the initiative and was the first to introduce an embargo on the sale of arms to Spain, without even waiting to find out whether other governments would follow suit.

The British Government acted in such a way as to lay the foundation for future collaboration with the fascist government that might come to power in Spain. "Eden," Rees-Mogg notes, "was concerned, as his speeches at the time show, that nothing should be done which ... would necessarily alienate the Franco Government if it finally consolidated its power."

But in London they were not anxious to advertise their prior claims in the matter of producing the policy of "non-intervention", and ceded this doubtful honour to the French Government led by the Social-Democrat Léon Blum. British historians still assert, in the teeth of the evidence, that this policy was initiated by Paris. Eden too did not fail to make mention of this in his Memoirs. Yet in actual fact "non-intervention", was born in Downing Street.

We know that to begin with Paris intended, following the initiative of Pierre Cot, the progressive Minister for Air, to allow the Republican Government of Spain to acquire arms in France. Then Blum was invited to visit London, and found himself obliged to abandon that intention and agree to put forward the proposal that there should be "non-intervention" in Spanish affairs. In January 1937 the progressive British journal, *Labour Monthly*, wrote: "It is no secret that the supposed Blum policy of 'non-intervention' in Spain was

in reality engineered by the National Government and forced on Blum."

It would be wrong, none the less, to underestimate the "contribution" made by the French Government to the suppression of the Spanish revolution. And not only France, but the USA as well pursued the line of connivance at fascist international brigandage. "Eden's personal conviction that non-intervention was the best practical policy," writes Rees-Mogg, "was reinforced by the support given to it by the United States Government."

At first the Soviet Union took part in the work of the Non-Intervention Committee, which met in London under the chairmanship of Lord Plymouth. The Soviet Government acted in the conviction that the Spanish Republicans were capable of suppressing the fascist revolt even without outside aid. Therefore the task was to see to it that the committee did prevent intervention in Spanish affairs by Germany and Italy. When the Soviet Union had become convinced that the committee was serving only as a cover for German and Italian intervention, it declared that it could not consider itself bound by the non-intervention agreement to any greater extent than its other participants. By this time the true nature of "non-intervention" had become quite clearly defined.

The Soviet Government, true to the Leninist principle of proletarian internationalism, came out in support for the progressive, revolutionary forces of the Spanish people, and this could not fail to draw down on that government increasing hostility on the part of the British Government. Harold Nicolson, having noted in August 1936 that the war in Spain was producing a polarisation of left and right forces in Europe, asked: "Which way do we go?" And stated: "The pro-German and anti-Russian tendencies of the Tories will be fortified and increased." And all this was in a situation when the threat of a new world war was growing with every passing day.

The increasingly active fascist preparations for war roused deep disquiet among all nations, including the British. The war in Spain produced a clearly defined dividing line between different social forces within the country. Forward-looking, progressive Britons came out in support of the Spanish people's just fight against fascism. They were opposed by the forces of reaction: various pro-fascist organisations, the monopolies, their political organisation—the Con-

servative Party, and the government formed by that party. The splitting of the country into two antagonistic camps was an accomplished fact. Few international events have evoked such a polarisation.

The reactionary forces made a gaudy display of their sympathy for Spanish fascism and for the rebel leader General Franco. One Conservative, Henry Page Croft, declared: "I recognize General Franco to be a gallant Christian gentleman, and I believe his word." His colleague Arnold Wilson trumpeted forth his attitude: "I hope to God Franco wins in Spain and the sooner the better." Even Winston Churchill, who had a better sense of the threat Germany and Italy represented to British interests, came out in support of the Spanish insurgents at the beginning of the Spanish events, and a year later was demanding that Britain recognise the Franco Government.

The right-wing leadership of the trades unions and the Labour Party officially supported the government's policy of "non-intervention". But progressive, militant elements within these organisations fought actively against it. Their action became more and more energetic as events revealed the true import of "non-intervention".

The most consistent supporters of the Spanish fighters for freedom were the British Communists. Among others who declared their solidarity with Republican Spain were the best representatives of the British intelligentsia and a certain proportion of those holding bourgeois-liberal views. Voluntary organisations were formed to assist the Spaniards in their fight for freedom. The internationalist feeling among British workers was expressed in the fact that 2,000 Britons went to Spain and fought fascism arms in hand, in the International Brigade.

Such a reaction among British people to the war in Spain only made the Conservative Government more anxious than ever to help fascism attain power in the Iberian Peninsula. The responsibility borne by the ruling circles of Britain for the establishment of a fascist dictatorship in Spain, after three years of war, is clear and beyond doubt. A.J.P. Taylor, a historian who is far from being a Communist, wrote: "British and French policy ... not the policy of Hitler and Mussolini, decided the outcome of the Spanish Civil War."

And British foreign policy at that time was under the charge of Anthony Eden. His biographers and many histo-

rians have noted that there were no disagreements between him and other members of the government over events in Spain. As A.J.P. Taylor remarks: "He had urged the League to abandon Abyssinia; he had acquiesced in Hitler's reoccupation of the Rhineland without serious protest; he had sponsored the pretences of the Non-Intervention Committee."

All these acts stimulated the aggressive intent of the fascist powers. Hitler and Mussolini, finding themselves not only exempted from punishment but positively encouraged, officially announced their unity of aims and their intention to display unity of action in achieving them. On October 25, 1936, a military and political bloc between Germany and Italy was formed, which became known as Berlin-Rome Axis. Under agreement between the two fascist governments Germany recognised the Italian seizure of Ethiopia, a general line was laid down for the conduct of both countries within the committee for non-intervention in Spanish affairs, recognition of the Franco Government by both Germany and Italy was confirmed, and measures for assisting him were set forth. Besides this, spheres of economic influence in the Balkans and the countries of the Danube basin were delimited. This was the first stage in the structuring of the bloc of fascist aggressors, in preparation for unleashing the Second World War. Soon the Rome-Berlin Axis was complemented by the Anti-Comintern Pact signed by Germany and Japan in November 1936, with Italy joining a year later.

This closing of the aggressor ranks should have been a warning to the "appeasers". But their only conclusion was that in order to reach a "general settlement" they ought to press on with concessions to fascism. "The immediate effect of the Spanish Civil War," states A.J.P. Taylor, "was to send British statesmen hurrying after the favour of Mussolini."

Eden undertook a number of measures designed to strengthen contacts with Rome, doing everything possible to convince Mussolini that he was regarded with understanding and friendship in London, and that he ought not to attribute too much significance to the unfortunate episode over sanctions, especially since they had now been lifted at British insistence.

The British Government was rather disturbed by the fact that Italy had sent several divisions to Spain, which under

the guise of "volunteers" were fighting against the Republic. In London they realised that this would not be done without a *quid pro quo* being forthcoming, and they were very much afraid that Italy might compel Spain to pay for this "aid" by handing over the Balearic Islands or some other part of Spanish territory. This would have markedly altered the state of affairs in the Mediterranean in favour of Italy and to the disadvantage of Britain. Suspicions in London were increased by an anti-British campaign in the Italian press.

Within the British Government there was a persistent feeling that after the lifting of sanctions it should be possible to improve relations with Italy by making certain concessions to her, whereupon Mussolini would respond in kind. So in July 1936 we find Eden announcing in the House of Commons that "we now considered the period of Mediterranean tension at an end". No favourable reaction from Rome followed.

At the beginning of November Eden made another attempt. He declared in Parliament that Britain had important interests in the Mediterranean and recognised the analogous interests of Italy. "In years gone by, the interests of the two countries in the Mediterranean have been complementary rather than divergent." So why not preserve such a state of affairs in the future! Eden wound up by saying: "It should ... be possible for each country to continue to maintain its vital interests in the Mediterranean not only without conflict with each other, but even with mutual advantage." A direct and open invitation to fascist Italy to collaborate with Britain in that part of the world.

After that there were active talks between Eden and Grandi, the Italian Ambassador in London, and in the upshot these made it clear that Mussolini would not be averse to concluding a Gentleman's Agreement with Britain.]

Now the French were alarmed. Here was London, again, carrying on talks behind their backs with one of France's opponents. Corbin, the French Ambassador in London, asked Eden for an explanation. Eden "calmed him down" with meaningless assurances, and promised to keep him informed of the progress of the talks with Italy.

In the course of these talks Grandi sought that London recognise the "legality" of the seizure of Ethiopia, and Eden showed great concern over the possibility of Mussolini gaining possession of the Balearic Islands. The British could not agree to Italian demands straight away, just like that, bear-

ing in mind the previous year's crisis over the Hoare-Laval plan. However, in order to demonstrate to the fascists that all would come right in time, the British Government recalled the Legation guard from Addis Ababa, and Eden told Grandi that he was ready "to treat the Abyssinian problem separately". After which, as Eden noted, "the Ambassador left in good spirits".

The Italian Government in its turn agreed to give an assurance that it had no intention of taking over Spanish territories, and in January 1937 the Gentleman's Agreement was concluded. The title was the cause of much wit afterwards: to conclude a Gentleman's Agreement one does require two gentlemen present.

The agreement stated that both Britain and Italy had vital interests in the Mediterranean, spoke of their being "in no way inconsistent with each other", gave assurances of mutual respect for these interests and disclaimed any desire to modify the *status quo*. Eden later asserted that "we had yielded nothing to get this agreement". This was far from being the case. By concluding this agreement with Mussolini Britain as it were exonerated all the aggressive acts of Italian fascism, officially recognising that the actions of the League of Nations, and Britain's own official position with regard to Italy, in the context of the latter's attack on Ethiopia, had been wrong. It was one more blow to the League of Nations and to British prestige, while Italian fascism had again received moral and political support.

Before a week was out Mussolini had broken the agreement. Without consulting his London associates he despatched 4,000 more "volunteers" to Spain. This was pregnant with possible changes in the *status quo*, which the "gentlemen" had just solemnly agreed to respect. Nor was there any halt in the fascist-inspired anti-British propaganda, although the agreement bound the sides "to use their best endeavours to discourage any activities liable to impair the good relations" between them.

Yet even then Eden tried to defend Mussolini. Later he admitted: "I was, if anything, too complaisant towards the Fascist dictator." How true, how very true!

International relations continued to deteriorate. In the spring of 1937 Eden's position in the government also took a turn for the worse. His patron Stanley Baldwin had now retired. Baldwin had succeeded in restoring to some extent his personal standing, which had been badly damaged by

the fiasco of the Hoare-Laval plan. He had taken up an uncompromising stance in the constitutional argument which had arisen with King Edward VIII. The King wished to marry a twice-divorced American, Mrs. Simpson. The Conservatives, headed by Baldwin, raised sharp objections to such a marriage, declaring that it would lower the dignity of the monarchy. The King, faced with a choice between love and the throne, chose love. On May 12, 1937, a new King was crowned, as George VI, and a British historian notes that at the Coronation ceremony Baldwin was greeted with almost as much enthusiasm as the Royal couple. The elderly Prime Minister decided to retire on the crest of this wave of popularity.

Neville Chamberlain became the new head of government; he had long enjoyed great influence in the Conservative Party and had been viewed as Baldwin's successor. Although Chamberlain was already 68 years old (he was only two years younger than Baldwin) he was extremely active. A very limited man, Chamberlain like all mediocrities raised by chance to high position was firmly convinced of his own genius. Unlike Baldwin, who gave his Ministers great freedom, he decided that he himself would formulate the political line to be followed in all spheres of governmental activity, and the Ministers must be only executants, carrying out precisely what he indicated.

Chamberlain decided that his main attention must be directed towards foreign policy. Eden recalls how Baldwin once said to him that "out of my twenty colleagues, there was probably not more than one who thought he should be Minister of Labour and nineteen who thought they should be Foreign Secretary". Neville Chamberlain was one of the nineteen.

Eden also relates that once in his presence Austen Chamberlain responded to Neville's remarks on the European situation by saying: "Neville, you must remember you don't know anything about foreign affairs." As time would show, the younger brother failed to heed the words of his senior.

An old-fashioned man—and not just in appearance, but in his convictions—he lived by the ideas and concepts of the Victorian age and failed to recognise that much of the former might of Britain had already departed. Thus he rarely succeeded in keeping his ideas on foreign policy in line with the considerably reduced real possibilities open to his country. This is a defect common to all British Prime Ministers in

the period of British imperialism's decline, and it costs the British people dear.

Never since the First World War had there been as many lords in the Cabinet as in Chamberlain's Government. He had no intention of making any account of the Liberal and Labour representatives, the Opposition, in the House of Commons. Chamberlain once noted in his diary that Baldwin had told him that "I always gave him the impression ... when I spoke in the House of Commons, that I looked on the Labour Party as dirt".

Long before Baldwin retired Chamberlain had given careful thought to the way in which he would operate as Prime Minister. This involved foreign policy as well. Chamberlain did not like the existing system of dealing with matters of foreign policy, with a great part being played by the Foreign Office and its special procedures, evolved and refined over centuries, for processing diplomatic documents. Chamberlain allotted the Foreign Office a secondary role only in carrying through the country's foreign policy. He considered that he himself should work out that policy, should take the decisions on matters of principle and should himself see them put into operation. For this, the Prime Minister must have his own direct contacts with foreign envoys, engage in personal correspondence with foreign heads of state, and reach the required agreements with these through personal talks. Such a procedure seems absurd at first glance, but Chamberlain justified it by the need to speed up the settlement of foreign policy matters and avoid the delays which would inevitably arise if the Foreign Office was left to deal with them. The fact that the Foreign Office had an experienced staff with an excellent knowledge of all aspects of the pertinent problems, and with the skills needed for diplomatic negotiations (and British diplomacy is indeed the most experienced and highly qualified in the bourgeois world), that it could therefore help the government to avoid serious errors—all this did not enter Chamberlain's head.

Previously, during his tenure of office as Chancellor of the Exchequer, Chamberlain had already made efforts to take the Foreign Office in hand, over the appointment of Ambassadors in particular. The staff of the Foreign Office is officially part of the Civil Service, which includes all those working for the state. The Civil Service has its own carefully worked-out structure, its own system for making

appointments within the service and advancing, rewarding, etc., those in it. The head of the Civil Service in Eden's time was Warren Fisher.

Only a few weeks had elapsed from Eden's assumption of office as Foreign Secretary when Fisher informed him (and it is impossible to suppose that he did this without prior consultation with Chamberlain) that henceforward he, Eden, must inform the Prime Minister, through Fisher, of any new appointments within the Foreign Office. It was actually a demand that Eden should admit the right of the head of the Civil Service to choose Ambassadors and envoys. Eden was furious, there was a sharp exchange between him and Fisher, and the question was referred to the Premier, Stanley Baldwin. But Baldwin declined to take any decision, and advised Eden to consult ... Chamberlain. Only after a serious talk with Chamberlain did Eden succeed in defending his right to independence in the appointment of Ambassadors and envoys.

Other warning signs of trouble to come also appeared at this period. Eden did not forget, for instance, Chamberlain's speech of June 10, 1936, in which he referred to sanctions against Italy as "the very midsummer of madness". Such a statement should only have been made by the Foreign Secretary, not by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but Chamberlain had come out with it without even consulting Eden beforehand. On June 17 Chamberlain wrote in his diary: "I did it deliberately because I felt that the party and the country needed a lead, and an indication that the government was not wavering and drifting without a policy... I did not consult Anthony Eden, because he would have been bound to beg me not to say what I proposed... He himself has been as nice as possible about it, though it is of course true that to some extent he has had to suffer in the public interest."

The new Prime Minister continued to pursue just this line towards Eden, and it led in the end to a split between them.

Since the Conservative propaganda machine, British bourgeois historiography, and Anthony Eden himself, had all for decades been publicising a version of events to the effect that Eden resigned as Foreign Secretary over political differences between himself and the Chamberlain Government, it will be as well to make it clear at this point that such was not the case. Some bourgeois writers agree with us on this. Thompson, for instance, recommends that the differ-

ences between Eden and Chamberlain should not be exaggerated, since two months before Eden left the government he was telling the Foreign Policy Committee that there was no immediate likelihood of war, and that the prospects for "appeasement" were better than ever. These words were uttered by Eden at the beginning of 1938 (just prior to Munich), and not at some chance gathering, but to a strictly limited audience, an official committee of the House of Commons. So they may be taken as reflecting Eden's political position at that time. And this was in accord with that of Neville Chamberlain—both of them were backing "appeasement" of the aggressor powers.

All the sources, including Eden's own Memoirs, agree in their evidence that there were no differences between Eden and Chamberlain over matters of principle in foreign policy, over its aims and objects.

Eden was obliged to resign because Chamberlain's actions in the field of foreign policy time and again placed him, Eden, in a humiliating position. Maybe he would have settled for swallowing these humiliations in order to retain the office by which he set such store, if his loss of face had not been so public. As it was, all was known not only to those working in the Foreign Office, not only to many of the senior men in the Civil Service, but to the diplomatic representatives of foreign countries as well. Anthony Eden had to resort to extreme measures in order to defend his own dignity, in order to retain, in some measure at least, the respect of those in his own Ministry. That was the principal reason for his resignation.

A second reason was Eden's disapproval (reinforced by the disapproval of the entire staff of the Foreign Office) of Chamberlain's diplomatic tactics. The latter's home-grown diplomacy was naive to a large degree, it rejected the ways and means of negotiating with foreign powers that had been selected and evolved through time and the art of diplomacy, and it ended by putting the country in a difficult situation.

Within the government a "Big Four" had come into being, headed by Chamberlain, which took the decisions on foreign policy. Its members, other than the Premier, were John Simon, Lord Halifax, and Samuel Hoare, who had long ago been brought back, quietly, into the Cabinet. Chamberlain was very much readier to listen to the opinion of these men than to the considerations put forward by Eden.

On all matters of foreign policy Chamberlain preferred to

consult, not the Foreign Secretary, but Horace Wilson—an adviser to the government on industry, who had much greater influence on governmental decisions than his official position warranted. Wilson was Chamberlain's trusted aide, and a convinced supporter of "appeasement". He took charge of a number of very important diplomatic talks, at Chamberlain's instance, and he tried to exert influence on what went on in the Foreign Office.

Later it became known that Horace Wilson had attempted to plant an informer in the Foreign Office, who, behind Eden's back, would have reported to 10 Downing Street all that happened in the Foreign Office. What had been decided on was the appointment of one of "their" men as Eden's Parliamentary Private Secretary.

In May 1937 his Parliamentary Private Secretary up to that time—Roger Lumley—got promoted: he was appointed to a post in India as Governor of Bombay. In place of Lumley, someone by the name of Thomas was recommended to Eden. Two weeks after the new Parliamentary Private Secretary had taken up his duties, he was summoned to see Horace Wilson and Warren Fisher, and a very curious conversation took place. According to Thomas, both men were thoroughly dissatisfied with the Foreign Office and with Robert Vansittart (the Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, who earlier had been Baldwin's PPS). "They told me that Vansittart was an alarmist," Thomas later related, "that he hampered all attempts of the Government to make friendly contact with the dictator states and that his influence over Anthony Eden was very great. For this reason they had strongly backed the idea that I, whom Horace Wilson knew well, should become P.P.S. at the Foreign Office because I would be in a position to help them to build a bridge between 10 Downing Street and the Foreign Office." Thomas refused to go behind the back of his chief.

At the end of 1937 Eden received convincing proof that Chamberlain was determined to settle major matters of foreign policy without reference to his Foreign Secretary, and without even informing him. [In October the Foreign Office gave a dinner in honour of the Prime Minister of Yugoslavia, to which Winston Churchill among others was invited. The latter witnessed how Halifax casually let drop, in the course of conversation during dinner, the information that he would be making "an unofficial visit" to Germany.

"Halifax ... said," writes Churchill, "...that Göring had invited him to Germany on a sports visit, and the hope was held out that he would certainly be able to see Hitler. He said that he had spoken about it to the Prime Minister, who thought it would be a very good thing, and therefore he had accepted." Churchill got the impression that Eden was surprised by this news and did not like it. Indeed, Halifax's trip had been organised without his even knowing of it.

The Sports Exhibition was only a pretext. In fact Halifax was engaging in highly important negotiations, on behalf of the British Government, with Hitler. On November 19, 1937, he and the Führer discussed a draft programme for a general Anglo-German agreement to be concluded later. Both participants exchanged assurances that their respective governments were unchanged in their hostility to the USSR. Then Halifax made approving comments on all that Nazism had so far achieved, at home and abroad. Britain, he said, desired closer relations with Germany, so that the two countries, together with Italy and France, might re-organise international relations in Europe.

Hitler demanded annulment of the Treaty of Versailles, and brought in the threat of war to scare the British side. Halifax declared Britain's readiness to correct the mistakes of Versailles at the expense of Danzig, Austria and Czechoslovakia. But it would be desirable if all this could be achieved without war, meaning: by agreement with Britain. Then Hitler remarked that Britain ought to return Germany's colonies to her. This demand did not put Halifax off his stroke. He replied that Chamberlain was of the opinion that the colonial question could be resolved.

The agreement of the British Government had thus been conveyed to Hitler that he could go ahead "settling" with Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland and even, in principle, get the German colonies back. Halifax was insistent that there should be an early start on negotiations for a general Anglo-German agreement, i.e. an agreement covering all the principal questions of interest to both countries. Hitler avoided giving a direct answer here. He saw that the policy of "appeasement" was changing the balance of forces in Germany's favour, and that the longer negotiations with Britain were deferred, the stronger would be Germany's position in such negotiations.

One can imagine Eden's indignation when he learned the tenor of Halifax's "sports" talks in Germany. It meant that

the Foreign Secretary had been set aside while international matters of the gravest import were decided.

On Halifax's return the British Government started on the formulation of concrete proposals on all aspects of a "general settlement" with Germany. In January 1938 a joint draft was ready, which summarised the considerations advanced by various departments on the "coming talks. These concerned: a draft Western pact; arms limitation; Germany's return to the League of Nations; Austria and Czechoslovakia. Mention was also made of the "re-shuffle of Central Africa", so as to meet Germany's demands for colonial restitution. Settlement of all the cardinal problems was provided for.

The position of the Foreign Office, i.e. Eden's position, was that consideration of the colonial question should not start before discussion of the other aspects of the "general settlement" was under way, and that Germany's right to the return of her former colonies should not be recognised in advance. On January 24, 1938, this question was discussed in the government's Foreign Affairs Committee. In connection with this discussion, Cadogan's diary has this note: "A. [Anthony Eden] ... only made point—accepted by P.M. [Prime Minister]—that if we make colonial concessions it is *only* as part of *general* settlement [Cadogan's italics—V.T.]." On January 31 Eden, Chamberlain, Wilson and two other senior officials from the Foreign Office return once again to the plan for the forthcoming talks with Hitler. Chamberlain suggests "doing the big thing" and giving Tanganyika back to Germany. A month later Neville Henderson, British Ambassador in Berlin, laid before Hitler the British proposals for meeting his relish for colonies at the expense of Central Africa. But the Ambassador had to report that Hitler displayed no interest in the proposals for a new colonial regime in Africa.

This behaviour on Hitler's part had a simple explanation. He meant to make into German colonies the territories of a number of other countries, to the south and east of Germany. Germany proposed to colonialise Europe, and was less interested in Africa than London imagined. Later Eden remarked that even in 1936 he had felt that "Hitler did not want colonies for the sake of raw materials or colonization, but for reasons of power and prestige".

New Year 1938 began for the Foreign Office with the removal of Vansittart. Although a widely disseminated

version of this event makes Chamberlain responsible, in fact it was rather the work of Eden.

Some believe that Vansittart was unacceptable to Chamberlain because he opposed "appeasement". This is not so. Vansittart was known for his anti-German sentiments. He was firmly convinced that Hitler was duping the British Government and that one could not believe a word he said. But from this premise Vansittart did not draw the conclusion that a change of policy was necessary. He was in favour of agreement with the aggressor countries, of "appeasing" them, but he called for caution, for a hedging of bets in case Germany and Italy ratted on their "benefactors".

Vansittart was a strong and determined character, with firmly formulated views on matters of foreign policy. That is why his superiors did not like him, not because his political concepts were any different from their own. His position as Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office meant that he not only could but was obliged to give advice and opinions for the benefit of his Minister, and that of the Prime Minister too from time to time, on all matters falling within the competence of the Foreign Office. He had great erudition, a powerful mind and political sensitivity; such a man could hardly suit either Eden or Chamberlain. Vansittart used to lay before his superiors lengthy, closely-argued memoranda. And when this or that question was under discussion he maintained his opinion obstinately.

Vansittart was undoubtedly a stronger character than either of his Ministers, and this is something not every Minister likes. How could Eden like it, when at Cabinet meetings some of his colleagues grumbled that he was "singing the tune" of his Permanent Under-Secretary. If the head of the Foreign Office called for caution in negotiations with Germany, some people began to say that foreign policy was being decided not so much by Eden as by Vansittart.

As far back as 1936 Eden had been visited by the idea of removing this man from the Foreign Office to somewhere at a distance. He got Baldwin's agreement that Vansittart should be appointed Ambassador in Paris. It was an important and honorific post. But Vansittart refused it. Eden begged Baldwin (then still Premier) to put pressure on him, but the pressure had no effect.

Eden came to the conclusion eventually that the man must go, come what might. The task was made easier by the fact that the Premier by this time was a man who quite

agreed with Eden on this point. Chamberlain was insistent that Vansittart must go, but as Eden writes, "this of itself would not have been enough if I had not felt that there were other advantages".

Eden decided to replace Vansittart by his deputy Alexander Cadogan. Cadogan too was erudite and hard-working, but his manner was quiet and unassuming. He had already worked with Eden for some years, and Eden considered him "his" man. Though some decades later it transpired, when Cadogan's *Diaries* were published, that he had not been anyone's man, but had been advancing his own career by falling in with the character of whatever chief he had. And he despised all of them equally. "Silly bladders!" he writes. "Self-advertising, irresponsible nincompoops. How I *hate* [Cadogan's italics—V.T.] Members of Parliament! They embody everything that my training has taught me to eschew—ambition, prejudice, dishonesty, self-seeking, light-hearted irresponsibility, black-hearted mendacity." Such was the opinion of British political figures held by someone who worked all his life in the upper echelons of the Foreign Office, who was Permanent Under-Secretary under Foreign Secretaries such as Eden, Halifax and Bevin, in regular contact with Prime Ministers—Baldwin, Chamberlain, Churchill and Attlee.

So it was announced that Alexander Cadogan was appointed Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, and that Vansittart was "promoted". For this purpose a post was invented which never existed before and has not done since, that of Chief Diplomatic Adviser to the Secretary of State. His functions were to include "advising the Secretary of State upon all major questions of policy concerning foreign affairs remitted to him for that purpose". A wide brief. But the Minister might not remit such questions to his Chief Adviser. And Eden used his freedom of choice. The post became a sinecure for Vansittart. The mainstream of affairs bypassed him, coming from below, from the departments, through Cadogan to Eden; some documents only were passed to Vansittart for appearances' sake. It was only rarely that he was invited to meetings of the upper echelons of the Ministry. He occupied the office usually reserved for the Permanent Under-Secretary, but he had no assistants or staff under him. On any document that came his way he prepared a detailed memorandum, analysing all the pros and cons. Eden and others to whom these mem-

oranda were addressed brushed Vansittart's advice aside, in which they were secretly but persistently encouraged by Cadogan, who cherished a bitter hatred of Vansittart. The latter was an obstinate man; he stood this state of things until 1941, when he was at last obliged to resign.

Eden made Cadogan his right-hand man, entirely certain that he was a convinced supporter of "appeasement" of the aggressor countries. This was particularly important in view of the key position Cadogan held.

The Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office is responsible for the effective internal functioning of the Ministry, he answers to Parliament for the funds allocated by the latter to that Ministry, he gives recommendations on the advancement or removal of members of its staff, he receives envoys of foreign powers. His most important duty is to give advice to the Minister on all foreign policy matters. Through the discharge of this duty, the Permanent Under-Secretary formulates the opinion and position of his political chief on all aspects of international relations. In the event of the post of Foreign Secretary going to someone without training in these matters, not well informed on international life (like Ernest Bevin, for example, just after the Second World War), he becomes in effect an instrument in the hands of the Permanent Under-Secretary and other senior civil servants of the Ministry. In many cases the Permanent Under-Secretary instructs different sections of the Ministry or embassies abroad direct, without reporting to the Minister. In his hands is concentrated all the correspondence coming in from British diplomatic representatives abroad, from foreign embassies in London and from the Ministry's various departments. It is the Permanent Under-Secretary who decides which of all these documents should be passed on to his chief and to other members of the Cabinet.

It is therefore natural that a change of Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office was an event that did not pass unnoticed. The German Embassy in London was trying to make out what was behind Cadogan's appointment. Having gathered information on the matter, the German Chargé d'Affaires reported to Berlin that no particular change in the direction of British foreign policy was to be expected as a result of these changes at the Foreign Office, and that Cadogan's views largely coincided with those of Eden. This prognosis proved correct.

Eden had hardly had time to make his mind up whether the changes had made life easier for him or not, when he himself was forced to quit the Foreign Office.

The possibility of having to resign first appeared before Eden in January 1938. He was very tired and had gone to take a rest on the French Riviera. Winston Churchill and Lloyd George had done the same; they were staying not far away from Eden. The three men met and talked politics. Eden played tennis and went rowing.

It was a pleasant, peaceful holiday, until on the morning of January 14 a telephone call came through from London. It was Cadogan, informing him that unforeseen events had occurred which could not be discussed over the telephone. They required Eden's immediate return to London. Eden left that evening for Paris. Bad weather meant that he had to continue his journey by train; there was a storm in the Channel, and the ferry was damaged and had to dock in Folkestone.

But Cadogan was already there on the quayside, with an assistant and quantities of important documents. Looking through these in the train, Eden realised straight away that he had not been recalled for nothing. It appeared that during the Foreign Secretary's absence an important communication from the President of the United States, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, had arrived, addressed to Chamberlain. Roosevelt expressed alarm at the rapid deterioration in international relations and stressed that a number of small or "middling" European states were starting to orientate themselves on rapprochement with the aggressor countries. This trend could lead to loss of influence by the democratic countries, and it should therefore be halted as soon as possible.

The President proposed to call, simultaneously with the efforts being made by the British Government to reach agreement with Germany and Italy, a conference which would prepare a proposal for all governments, inviting them to accept some important principles to be observed in international relations. These principles were to include arms reductions, equal access to raw materials, and adherence to rules of war. On the Treaty of Versailles, the President declared that some unjust particularities of the post-war system might be removed. Roosevelt warned the British Ambassador in Washington, Ronald Lindsay, that he expected an answer not later than January 17, and that if the

answer was favourable he would put his plan into operation at once.

A very significant initiative! Undoubtedly the President of the United States had perceived more clearly than did the politicians of London and Paris the direction which international relations were taking. But what Roosevelt had in mind at that juncture was not the organisation of a collective rebuff to the aggressors. He thought it possible to negotiate a new "general settlement" with them, but under the aegis of the USA, not of Great Britain as Chamberlain wanted. The President was unperturbed by the fact that American foreign policy at that time was, officially, isolationist. He intended to intervene with energy in European and world politics, to seize the initiative from the British in making a deal with the aggressor countries and to get such a deal construed by the efforts of the American Government; hence his readiness to alter the Versailles-Washington system (within certain limits, of course) in favour of Germany, Italy and Japan.

Chamberlain, on receipt of the President's proposal, never thought of summoning Eden in order to discuss with him Britain's possible attitude. More than that; knowing that Eden would be back quite soon, he refused to wait for his arrival, and without even taking the advice of his Cabinet colleagues sent a reply to the President which was not just negative but violently so.

Chamberlain wrote that he himself was making efforts to reach an agreement with Germany and, especially at that particular moment, with Italy, and he would therefore be prepared to recognise the Italian seizure of Ethiopia *de jure*. Inasmuch as the President's proposal cut across the efforts being undertaken by the British, he should, in Chamberlain's opinion, postpone his plan.

This reply went off to Washington on January 13th; Roosevelt was expecting his answer only by the 17th, and Eden returned on the 15th.

If one discounts the well-worn phrases of diplomatic courtesy, and there were not too many of them in this case, what Chamberlain's missive meant was: keep out of our business. This very categorical attitude was due to the fact that Chamberlain had an unconcealed antipathy to America and the Americans, and undoubtedly underestimated the growing role of the USA in international affairs.

Eden too did not want the Americans taking over the

leading role in European affairs from the British, but he was extremely alarmed when he saw that Chamberlain's reply was couched in terms which would aggravate Anglo-American relations in the highest degree, and would make it difficult to get the cooperation of the United States (should it be needed), in settling European affairs. As for the Far East, there Britain was only too clearly unable to do anything to protect her own interests without American help.

Eden was highly indignant. His chief was demonstratively ignoring him, and taking decisions behind his back on matters where the opinion of the Foreign Secretary was required as a matter of course. On January 16 Eden went to Chequers (it was a Sunday) and tried to explain to Chamberlain the possible bad effects, for Britain, of his reply to Roosevelt. This was the first occasion on which he brought into play the threat of resignation. At Eden's insistence, telegrams were sent to Washington which were intended to soften the effect made by Chamberlain's reply. But they did not deceive Roosevelt; he postponed his plan.

Chamberlain gave way to Eden on points of detail, actually affecting only the terms in which the rejection of the American initiative was couched, but at the same time he took the decision that he would get rid of this awkward Minister. This was done very shortly afterwards, in connection with Chamberlain's intention of starting official talks with Italy on a "general settlement".

From Chamberlain's published diaries we know that as far back as August 1937 he had sent a personal letter to Mussolini. The conceited Premier liked this kind of correspondence, and was happy to receive a reply signed personally by the fascist ringleader. He did not show Mussolini's letter to Eden. Rees-Mogg notes: "When he became Prime Minister, he made a habit of deceiving his Foreign Secretary."

Neville Chamberlain's sister-in-law (the wife of his deceased, brother Austen) was suddenly an important diplomatic personage. She acted as intermediary, passing Chamberlain's letters addressed to Mussolini over to Ciano, the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs, and receiving the replies. There is a characteristic detail noted in Ciano's diary: when Lady Chamberlain made her appearances in his office, she frequently wore the Italian fascist badge.

Chamberlain was in haste to begin talks with Italy on

a wide range of issues. He was trying to prise Italy away from Germany, and for the sake of achieving that he was prepared to recognise the seizure of Ethiopia.

On February 17, 1938, Neville Chamberlain wrote in his diary: to suspend negotiations "would be to convince Mussolini that he must consider talks with us off, and act accordingly... Italian public opinion would be raised to a white heat against us... The dictatorships would be driven closer together, the last shred of Austrian independence would be lost, the Balkan countries would feel compelled to turn towards their powerful neighbours, Czechoslovakia would be swallowed, France would either have to submit to German domination or fight, in which case we should almost certainly be drawn in. I could not face the responsibility for allowing such a series of catastrophes." Such was Chamberlain's concept three days before Eden's resignation.

Let us quote an interesting analysis, to our mind, of this concept, an analysis made by Randolph Churchill over quarter of a century later. "There seem to be no fewer than six false assumptions contained in this short diary entry," he writes. "He [Chamberlain] assumes that six misfortunes would come upon our country", if he were frustrated from his urgent desire to have talks with Mussolini: "1) '...the dictatorships would be driven closer together.' Although Chamberlain had his way and had his chat, they were. 2) '...the last shred of Austrian independence would be lost.' This event occurred twenty-two days later. 3) '...the Balkan countries would feel compelled to turn towards their powerful neighbours.' They did. 4) '...Czechoslovakia would be swallowed.' With Chamberlain's help it was. 5) '...France would either have to submit to German domination or fight.' France did both... 6) '...In which case we should almost certainly be drawn in.' We were." Thus history overturned all the main premises of Chamberlain and those who thought as he did. But it needed the test of time.

One must bear clearly in mind that Eden too was in favour of talks with Italy, and for the same purpose, i.e. "appeasement". But he, unlike Chamberlain, insisted that before official talks began (unofficial ones were already in progress, and the difference between official and unofficial negotiations is not always very great), Rome must demonstrate its readiness to keep its word by fulfilling the promise already made to London that the so-called Italian "volunteers" would be withdrawn from Spain. The differences between Chamber-

lain and Eden were thus over purely tactical considerations and had no bearing on the strategic line of British policy towards Italy. But the Prime Minister's insultingly cavalier attitude to his Foreign Secretary, his demonstrative desire to take action on foreign affairs behind the latter's back, made Eden's position unbearable.

Matters were complicated by the fact that the Italians knew about Chamberlain's attitude to the head of the Foreign Office. They knew because they received copies of all the important papers coming in to the British Embassy in Rome. Among the junior staff of the Embassy there was an Italian, who in return for a very handsome sum of money, supplied this valuable information to the Italian Foreign Ministry. Ciano was not exaggerating when he wrote in his diary: "We read everything the British send." This piece of espionage only became known to the British in 1944, and then the agent went unpunished since he was an Italian citizen.

Another reliable source of information for Mussolini was a secret connection between one Joseph Ball, who was on the staff of the Conservative Party, and a middle-ranking official of the Italian Embassy in London. Later Ball was knighted "for his services to the nation". It is said that Eden knew about this channel of information, but considered it unimportant. A mistake!

Under such circumstances one can hardly wonder that the Italian Ambassador, Grandi, had the impudence to reply to an invitation from Eden to come and see him that he was too busy, he was booked for a game of golf.

Having refused to see Eden on either the 16th or the 17th of February, Grandi none the less found time to meet a secret emissary of Chamberlain's, who had according to the Ambassador been acting as a means of direct contact between him and Chamberlain since October 1937. Thus a meeting was arranged on February 18, 1938 between Grandi and Chamberlain.

Chamberlain wanted it to be tête-à-tête, but Eden insisted that three persons be present. The meeting was typical in that Chamberlain accepted all the conditions laid down by the Italians: he undertook to recognise the seizure of Ethiopia, to make a loan of £25 million available to Italy, and to travel to Rome in person to meet Mussolini. There is no precedent in diplomatic history for a Prime Minister and a foreign Ambassador openly acting against the former's

Minister—for a Premier to make common cause with the Ambassador and set aside all the advice of his own Minister.

But even more incredible things happened that same evening. Grandi notes that after the talks in Downing Street Chamberlain sent his liaison man to see him. As arranged beforehand, they met in an ordinary London taxi. The agent told Grandi that Chamberlain sent his hearty congratulations, that the Prime Minister agreed with what the Ambassador had said, that it had all been very useful to him, and that he was sure all would go well the next day.

The Prime Minister had by his actions already dismissed Eden, in effect, from the discharge of his duties, and the latter could do nothing but resign. Later Duff Cooper gave an account of Chamberlain's behaviour when the matter was discussed in Cabinet: "While allowing his colleagues to suppose that he was as anxious as any of them to dissuade the Foreign Secretary from resigning, he had, in reality, determined to get rid of him, and had secretly informed the Italian Ambassador that he hoped to succeed in doing so."

Finally Eden's resignation was made. Not all the members of the government by any means realised what it was all about, but they supported Chamberlain. Hailsham, the Lord Chancellor, expressed the view of the majority of his Cabinet colleagues when he wrote to his son: "I can't tell you why Anthony resigned because I couldn't make out myself." This was natural enough. For, as Thompson notes, the differences between Chamberlain and Eden concerned matters of detail only—the timing of talks with Italy. Ministers do not abandon their posts for such minor matters as that! The discussion in the Cabinet was prolonged, and in the end one of the Ministers present, taking in all good faith the Premier's hypocritical position, proposed that in order to keep Eden in the government he should be allowed to conduct the negotiations with Italy as he saw fit. Chamberlain, fearing that this might lead to a compromise, ignored the proposal and said to Eden: "Then you will send me your letter [of resignation—*V.T.*]."

One should bear in mind that for Eden and for British bourgeois historiography it is not merely advantageous but highly necessary to present the matter as though Eden's resignation was evoked by considerations of political princi-

ple. It is necessary to raise his prestige, and to rehabilitate the Conservative Party. But the facts are, as they say, there for all to see, and allow one to establish the truth without particular difficulty.

The circumstances of Eden's resignation bear witness that he was not at all anxious to go, but that Chamberlain was very anxious that he should go. In order to put pressure on Eden, the Premier and those closest to him invented a version of the matter which indicated that Eden needed to resign or at least to stand down for a time for alleged health reasons. Eden's appearance, fresh as he was from an excellent holiday on the Riviera, was visible evidence of the lack of truth in the assertion, but this did not worry those who had invented it. On February 18 John Simon came to see Eden, talked at length about indifferent matters, and at the end of it all said: "Take care of yourself, Anthony. You look rather tired. Are you certain that you're all right?" Eden assured him that he was in perfect health.

That was not the end of it, though. Before long Simon met Eden's PPS, Thomas, told him that he was as fond of Eden as if he had been his own son, that he was becoming more and more depressed in watching him at Cabinet meetings, and had come to the conclusion that "he was both physically and mentally ill". A six months' holiday could restore him, and it was very important that Thomas should go away with him. "During this period he and his Cabinet colleagues would keep his seat warm for him and look after foreign affairs." Thomas replied that his chief had just returned from a good holiday in the south of France and that his health had never been better. But Simon insisted, and assured Thomas that all this lay in his hands. He begged him to be sensible and take Eden away. Thomas refused, being always loyal to his chief.

Then it was the turn of Horace Wilson to work on Thomas: he rang up to say that "all was up and that Anthony would resign for reasons of health". After which he added meaningfully that "it would be better for him ... and what is more, it would be better for you if you persuaded him to do so".

On February 20, 1938, Eden sent Chamberlain his letter of resignation. The last paragraph of this was calculated to reassure the leader of the Conservative Party. "May I end on a personal note?" wrote Eden. "I can never forget the help and counsel that you have always so readily given me, both

before and since you became Prime Minister. Our differences, whatever they may be, cannot efface that memory nor influence our friendship." What is this—empty words of formal courtesy, very popular in British political life, or a programme for relations in the future, an assurance of the writer's complete reliability?

The debate in Parliament should provide the answer to that question. According to tradition, a member of government who resigns has the right, and is given the opportunity, to explain his reasons before the House of Commons, and defend his position. Winston Churchill, angry because he had not been offered a place in the government, and likewise because of Chamberlain's too-conciliatory attitude to Hitler and Mussolini, decided that Eden's resignation gave him a chance to mount an attack on the Cabinet. So on the eve of Eden's appearance before the House Churchill sent him a letter advising him not to spare his former colleagues in the interests of the country.

But Eden had not the least intention of organising and leading a campaign against the Chamberlain Government. He wanted to retire with dignity, but calmly and quietly, without irritating the upper echelons of party and government. So his speech was mild, vague and evasive. It was clearly a disappointment to the Members of Parliament, especially those who were doubtful and critical of the policy of "appeasement".

Not one of the members of the Cabinet took Eden's part. The only ones who resigned along with him were his deputy, Cranborne, and their respective Parliamentary Private Secretaries Thomas and Patrick, plus the Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Overseas Trade Department, Ronald Tree. It is acknowledged by all that Cranborne's speech on his motives for resignation was more definite and more militant than Eden's.

The Opposition tried to use the debate to attack the government's foreign policy. Their speeches were much more barbed than Eden's, but the vagueness and lack of content in his contribution made it much more difficult to criticise Chamberlain. In his reply, the Prime Minister stressed that he and Eden were united in their view of the ultimate aims of foreign policy, they had parted company only on the means to be used to attain those aims. Eden made no disclaimer to this, for it was true. Chamberlain went on to say that he himself and other members of the government

had hoped that Eden "would not feel this of sufficient importance to necessitate a parting".

The Labour Opposition moved a vote of no confidence in the government on the matter of Eden's resignation. When it came to the vote, only one Conservative voted against the government, and it was not Eden, but Adams. Eden, Cranborne, Churchill and some other Conservatives, under twenty in all, abstained.

In the country dissatisfaction with "appeasement" was growing. A number of statesmen of a realistic turn of mind were gradually coming to see the danger inherent in a policy of concessions and deals with the fascist powers. These people expected that Eden, having left the government, would head the struggle to get foreign policy changed. But their hopes were disappointed straight away.

Some historians consider that Eden did not take up this fight because he was not a fighter by nature. Thompson writes that "he was constitutionally incapable of leading a revolt... He assumed ... the role of moderate and cautious, if highly respected, critic."

This judgement is fair enough, but it is not the whole truth. What is extremely important is the fact that there were no political disagreements of principle between Eden and Chamberlain, Halifax, Simon and their like. The evidence for this is there in all his work in the field of foreign policy when a member of the "National" Government and up to his resignation, in his behaviour during his resignation and in subsequent years. It is interesting to read the comment made by Eden himself in his Memoirs thirty years on, when history and historiography had already pronounced their final verdict on Chamberlain and his policy. "Reading over the papers concerning my resignation," he writes, "it is my conviction that if the Foreign Secretary had been allowed to continue to handle the negotiations with Count Grandi, in his own time and by his own methods, which were those of normal diplomacy, he would have secured, with less risk, as much progress in Anglo-Italian relations as the mood of the dictator in Rome made possible."

That, then, is Eden's own last word. One may fairly ask—where is the disagreement with Chamberlain's line, with the policy of "appeasement", in this? There is none. So what is left? All that is left is a difference of opinion on technical details, on the methods by which that policy was to be applied. Eden is regretting that he was not given

the chance to carry through Chamberlain's concept in practice, he is sure that he could have done it much better, by traditional diplomatic methods.

Could Eden have headed a fight against Chamberlain, when his only difference with him was a technical one, not affecting any political concept? Of course he could not.

This absence of any profound difference of principle gives rise to one more reason for Eden's restrained behaviour at the time of his resignation and in the period following—his hope and desire that he might come back into the government. This was an important consideration urging him to show restraint and calm, and not in any circumstances to exacerbate relations with Chamberlain. Tom Jones, who was Cabinet secretary and very well informed, wrote to a friend overseas after a talk with Eden: "He is popular with the Left, but does not want to bang the door against his return to the Right... Baldwin and Halifax are sympathetic to Eden's present attitude."

Such was Anthony Eden's behaviour after finding himself obliged to quit the Foreign Office. This to a large extent determined the reaction within the country to his resignation. Some historians, writers of memoirs, and biographers tell us that at the moment of crisis a crowd gathered in Downing Street and greeted Eden with applause as he left No. 10. But they are clearly exaggerating the significance of this scene. The reaction of public opinion in general was cool, and the government's position was not shaken.

On February 25 Eden made a speech in his constituency of Leamington. There he was greeted by singing and shouts of "Recall Eden!" But on this occasion Eden's words were even kinder to the government than in his speech to the House of Commons. The Leamington speech found favour in Chamberlain's eyes, and he sent Eden a letter: "After reading your speech to your constituents last night, I should like to send you a few friendly words ... the dignity and restraint of your speech must add further to your reputation." A clear word of advice that Eden should continue to behave in the same way.

The reaction in the British press was unexcited: no change in British policy was foreseen as likely to follow Eden's resignation.

The fascist newspapers, especially those in Italy, which had been conducting a campaign against Eden, greeted the event with cries of joy and congratulation to Chamberlain.

One Italian paper referred to Eden as the corpse that had been removed from Downing Street.

But Eden was far from being a political corpse. He had been a lucky man from the beginning, and he was lucky now, very lucky. By resigning in February 1938, Eden created for himself the reputation (even if undeserved) of an opponent of "appeasement" and a supporter of energetic resistance to the aggressor powers, thus clearing the way for him to return to government during the Second World War and even become (in 1955) Prime Minister of Great Britain.

"The drama of Eden's resignation," writes Randolph Churchill, "his 'broken career', purged him of all the malfeasance of the MacDonald-Baldwin decade, for which he was every bit as responsible as MacDonald, Baldwin, Hoare, Simon and Halifax. When, in later years, 'appeasement' (first used by Eden as a term of diplomatic art) reared its head as a dirty word, Eden was in public estimation sacrosanct, because of his act of resignation. Though he certainly did not plan it this way, it was his resignation which ultimately led ... to his becoming Prime Minister of Great Britain." A. J. P. Taylor, the historian, has stated the same irrefutable truth.

Eden's time out of office proved rather short—only 18 months. He himself never thought he would be so fortunate.

Immediately after resigning Eden and his wife left for the south of France. He did not reappear in the House of Commons until two months later. The ex-office-holder, around whom various persons were agitating in the hope of using him as a counter against the Chamberlain Government, hastened to leave London for the shores of the Mediterranean until the fuss over his resignation should have died down. It died down quite quickly, for soon public attention was diverted to important international events. During the eighteen months that elapsed before he again entered the government, Eden thought a lot and spoke little.

At this time Eden was 41. He looked younger, as always he took great care with his appearance and made a good impression on audiences, especially the women. He had attained maturity now, and acquired great experience of Civil Service.

His resignation had brought him fresh popularity. So naturally newspapers regularly asked him to contribute articles, for large fees. A publisher offered him advanta-

geous terms for a book on foreign policy. Tempting offers came to him from the business world. Eden did not take up these opportunities, for he did not consider his political career to be at an end. He hoped to enter the government again one day.

But for the time being he rested on the shores of the Mediterranean, playing his favourite game, tennis, and occasionally exchanging letters on political matters with a few friends. He abstained from any public pronouncements on political questions. By his own admission, he did not want to embarrass the government.

Beatrice, on the principle that "every dark cloud has a silver lining", was happy that at last Anthony had time to be with his family. She had had only a vague idea, time was, of his ministerial cares, the things that kept him so occupied; she had felt for him in the troubles that beset him in the first two months of 1938, but she had not the capability or the desire to enter very deeply into the matters that so concerned him. Politics frankly bored her and she had no interest in them. She was probably not given any great pleasure by Anthony dedicating a volume of his speeches to her, with the superscription "To B. E. from A. E. In gratitude to a patient listener to each one of these pages". Certainly she would have actually found reading the book far from interesting, even dull.

In April 1938 Eden received a letter from Churchill informing him that Chamberlain and Halifax (who had taken over as Foreign Secretary) had completed their talks with Mussolini. Churchill wrote: "The Italian pact is, of course, a complete triumph for Mussolini, who gains our cordial acceptance for his fortification of the Mediterranean against us, for his conquest of Abyssinia, and for his violence in Spain." Eden replied: "Mussolini gives us nothing more than the repetition of promises previously made and broken by him..." Eden shared, by and large, Churchill's opinion of Chamberlain's Italian "achievement".

At the end of the year the British Ambassador in Rome, Lord Perth, presented his credentials, which were addressed to "the King of Italy and Emperor of Ethiopia". The agreement reached was in force.

Eden kept silence when on March 12, 1938 Hitler moved Nazi troops into Austria, contrary to the provisions of the Treaties of Versailles and St. Germain, and "attached" that hitherto independent country to Germany. The attack on

Austria's independence had started while Eden was still Foreign Secretary, with Hitler taking various steps to facilitate later seizure of the country. At that time too Eden had said nothing. Dennis Bardens comments: "It is strange to reflect that Eden made no public statement in defence of Austria at this hour, nor did he hesitate to abandon Austria to her fate."

What is more, under the Stresa Agreement, concluded in 1935, Britain, France and Italy were bound to support Austria if any threat to her independence arose. When Eden was asked in Parliament, shortly before his resignation, whether the British Government would meet its commitments under this agreement, he had replied that Britain was not bound to take the initiative in the matter and would take action only if requested to do so by France and Italy. A dishonest answer, for Eden knew very well that France would not take the initiative, and still less would Italy, since Mussolini was already Hitler's ally at the time. But this reply in Parliament had another, further aspect: Hitler was thereby informed officially that if he seized Austria he would not meet with any opposition from Britain, in spite of the Treaties of Versailles and St. Germain and the Stresa Agreement.

But the reply thus given by Eden ceases to be surprising if one recollects that the British Government had long ago included Austria on the list of concessions that must be made to Nazism in order to "appease" it. Halifax had given British agreement to German annexation of Austria in a conversation with Hitler. When the threat of German aggression against Austria was discussed by the Cabinet on February 16, Eden had not proposed that Britain meet its treaty obligations towards Austria. He told the members of the Cabinet that he "would have to watch the situation very carefully and he would have to keep in close contact with the Prime Minister". Thus run the minutes of the Cabinet meeting.

—Eden and other leading figures in the Foreign Office were quite at one with Chamberlain and Halifax on the matter. This is confirmed by Cadogan's cynical comments in his diary. On March 11 he writes: "News coming in all the morning that Germany is moving against Austria... At the end of the day, H. [Halifax] and I agreed that our consciences were clear!" A strange conception of clear political conscience. Later Cadogan wrote to Henderson in Berlin

saying: "Thank Goodness, Austria's out of the way."

It was evident to the British Government that after the annexation of Austria Nazi Germany would turn its hungry gaze on Czechoslovakia. In the context of Austrian affairs, the Foreign Policy Committee on March 18 discussed the possibility of German aggression against Czechoslovakia. The following entry appears in Cadogan's diary for that day: "F.P.C. [Foreign Policy Committee] unanimous that Czechoslovakia is not worth the bones of a single British Grenadier. And they're quite right too!" Thus the ruling elite of Britain decided, long before Munich, to hand Czechoslovakia over to Hitler.

The Soviet Government understood very well that each new act of fascist aggression brought a world war nearer. The USSR therefore made an energetic protest against Germany's absorption of Austria and proposed to the governments of several countries, including Britain, that measures be taken against possible further acts of aggression. The Soviet Government expressed its readiness "to participate in collective actions aimed at halting the further development of aggression", and its agreement "to immediately launch on discussions with other powers, in the League of Nations or outside it, on practical measures dictated by the circumstances. Tomorrow may be too late, but today the time has not yet passed for doing this."

The British Government immediately rejected the Soviet proposal. Quite understandably. Neville Chamberlain had a boundless hatred of the USSR and naturally did not want to act together with it; such cooperation did not enter into his concept of foreign policy. The day after the Soviet proposal was made he wrote in his diary about the Russians "stealthily and cunningly pulling all the strings behind the scenes to get us involved in war with Germany (our Secret Service doesn't spend all its time looking out of the window)".

Like many people, limited people especially, Chamberlain judged others by himself, i.e. he attributed his own intentions to the Soviet Government. The British Prime Minister was striving to egg Germany on against the USSR and thought that that was a cunning political line, so naturally he could not but think that Moscow was doing the same; in their place it was what he would have done.

As for the British Intelligence Service, its agents were very diligently trying to look *in* at windows, Soviet ones.

But they did not have a great deal of success. After the Second World War British statesmen admitted that the ideas they had had in the late thirties on Soviet capabilities proved to be hopelessly wrong, which is evidence that the information on the Soviet Union which the Secret Service provided for the British Government was a long way wide of the mark. This is certainly also true of the information they got on the aims of Soviet foreign policy.

At that period neither Eden nor yet Churchill expressed themselves in favour of joint action with the USSR to avert war. Precious time was trickling away, the danger of world war was growing, but the "appeasers" in London pressed on regardless...

The policy of "appeasement" reached its culminating point in the autumn of 1938, when Czechoslovakia was surrendered to Hitler. London was trying to get the fascist powers, in return for concessions made (at the expense of other countries, of course), to carry out their acts of aggression with the agreement and at the behest of the British Government. Their second aim was that "appeasement" should lead to a "general settlement" of European affairs, i.e. to a general agreement between Britain, Germany and Italy. The surrender of Czechoslovakia to Hitler would, in the opinion of the British Government, assist in the realisation of both these aims.

The problem of Czechoslovakia proved to be possibly the hardest for the British Government to manage. The difficulty was that they had not only to compel the Czechoslovak Government to betray its own country and people for the benefit of the Nazis, not only to get the French Government to betray Czechoslovakia by refusing to honour the mutual assistance agreement between them, but also to create by diplomatic intrigue a political situation in which the Soviet Union would be unable to meet its treaty obligations to come to the assistance of Czechoslovakia. Since the USSR did not waver, but expressed itself ready to come to the aid of the Czechoslovak Republic at the first call of the Czechoslovak Government, it somehow had to be so managed that the Czechoslovak Government should refuse that assistance. The position of the "appeasers", and of the treacherous reactionary forces within Czechoslovakia which had betrayed their own people, was complicated by the fact that the Soviet Union was ready to assist Czechoslovakia even in the event of the French Government not doing

so. So hostilities between Germany and Czechoslovakia had to be prevented, because the system of alliances might have come into operation and Germany was sure to have been crushed, which might mean the end of the Nazi regime. The British Government could not contemplate such a thing.

On March 16, 1938, there was a meeting of the British Cabinet which worked out a concrete plan for Britain's betrayal of Czechoslovakia. It was decided, firstly, "to persuade the French to abandon their guarantee of Czechoslovakia", secondly, "induce the Czech Government to remedy the grievances of the Sudeten Germans [i.e. to hand the Sudetenland over to Germany]" and, thirdly, together with the French Government "concentrate their efforts on getting Hitler to accept this solution to the Czechoslovakian problem".

Remedying the "grievances" of the Sudeten Germans, as formulated by the Nazis, inevitably meant dismemberment of Czechoslovakia, and a dismembered Czechoslovakia would very quickly be completely swallowed up by Germany. That was the import of the Cabinet decision of March 16. Alan Lennox-Boyd, a Conservative who knew of the plan, declared in public that "Germany could absorb Czechoslovakia and Great Britain would remain secure". That was what the Chamberlain Government believed.⁴¹

Hitler knew this, and hastened to seize Czechoslovakia. His haste almost led to highly unpleasant complications in May 1938, when it became clear that Germany might meet with armed resistance from Czechoslovakia, and that its allies might come to its aid. The British Government, alarmed at the possible consequences, insisted that any action to take over Czechoslovakia must be postponed, and set about feverishly preparing a "peaceful" settlement of the problem. All the decencies were cast aside. Systematic pressure was brought to bear on the Czechs and on the French to ensure that they would accept the plan conceived in London for the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia.

As historians have since remarked, Chamberlain literally ran around after Hitler. On September 15 he goes to Berchtesgaden to meet the Führer, and reaches agreement with him on the handing over to Germany of the Sudetenland. French Government representatives are hastily summoned to London and browbeaten into agreeing to the conditions formulated at Berchtesgaden. It seems as though everything is on the point of being settled. On September 22 Chamberlain

rushes back to Hitler at Bad Godesberg, but returns utterly bewildered. The Führer put forward fresh and far-reaching demands. Again France's leaders are put under pressure to capitulate to Nazi Germany.

At the same time, the government in London put in train a number of measures designed to scare the British people by the threat of imminent war, so that they would accept a "settlement" of the Czechoslovak problem as rescuing peace, for themselves and other nations, and would be properly grateful to Chamberlain. So trenches were demonstratively dug in the London parks, gas-masks were issued, the papers carried pictures of new-born infants in hospitals being placed in gas-proof containers, etc., etc. A state of alarm was created, a psychological atmosphere built up of inevitably advancing dire danger. It had its effect.

Members of Parliament were recalled from their holidays and Parliament sat on September 28. Chamberlain spoke at length on the existing situation. A note was then passed to him, he read it and then announced that he had received an invitation from Hitler to attend a conference in Munich on the following day, a conference in which France and Italy would also take part. The atmosphere was such that the whole House, including the Labour Opposition, rose and applauded Chamberlain. Harold Nicolson, himself a Conservative, described this scene as "one of the most lamentable exhibitions of mass hysteria". The leaders of all the parties rushed to congratulate Chamberlain. Even his consistent opponent, the experienced Churchill, drew a cheer as he cordially shook the Prime Minister's hand and said: "I congratulate you on your good fortune. You were very lucky." Some Members shouted: "Thank God for the Prime Minister!"

On September 29, 1938, there was a meeting in Munich attended by Chamberlain, Hitler, Mussolini and the French Premier Daladier. This conference decided that the Sudetenland should be handed over to Germany. The decision was conveyed to the Czechoslovak representatives, who took no part in the conference and awaited its outcome in a separate room. They were told that "this was a sentence without right of appeal and without possibility of modification". And they accepted their sentence. After that, Czechoslovakia as an independent state had less than six months left to live.

In return for services rendered, Chamberlain intended to get his reward from Hitler. He asked him to sign a declaration on the future of Anglo-German relations. On September 30 an interpreter read over to Hitler the text of the declaration, prepared by Strang and corrected by Chamberlain, and the Führer immediately, after hearing it once and giving it no thought or discussion, signed the paper. Chamberlain had set up the deal without even informing his ally, Daladier.

The Anglo-German declaration of September 30 was in effect a pact of non-aggression and collaboration. Chamberlain thought that this declaration guaranteed Britain against war with Germany, but Hitler could take it as a guarantee that Britain would not oppose any further acts of aggression by him.

Chamberlain was greeted with rejoicing in Britain. Alighting from the aeroplane, he waved the declaration with Hitler's signature and cried: "I've got it!" In Downing Street an enthusiastic crowd had gathered to greet the "peace-maker". The Prime Minister came out and declared: "This is the second time ... that there has come back from Germany to Downing Street peace with honour. I believe it is peace for our time." Chamberlain bore himself like conqueror.

Disenchantment soon set in. Even at the time of Chamberlain's first trips to see Hitler some statesmen had realised that a dangerous situation for Britain was being created: concessions to Germany and Italy were resulting in a growth of their military and strategic potential and a relative weakening of that of Britain and France. The balance of power was being shifted more and more in favour of the fascist powers. And this meant that a terrible threat was building up to the positions of Britain and France both in Europe and beyond.

In March Brigadier-General Spears, who had been in Czechoslovakia at the time of Hitler's march into Austria, had demanded that the "Western Democracies" stand by Czechoslovakia, for if they did not, "Nazi Germany will predominate ... as far as the Bosphorus, absorbing on its way immense resources, from the wheat of Hungary to the oil of Rumania". As a military man, Spears also took into account the consequences of Hitler's seizure of the mighty Czech armament establishments (the Skoda works).

As the balance of power progressively altered to the

detriment of Britain, a number of statesmen in London began to give more and more thought to relations with the Soviet Union.

A well-known Conservative politician, Leopold Amery, noted in his diary at the time of the Munich conference: "If this were the prelude to a real European settlement ... (the exclusion of Russia) would certainly not weigh with me, for I have always looked before this issue became acute, to Germany, France and Italy working together with our co-operation as forming the only basis of a satisfactory European system excluding Russia." The plans of Amery and his fellows were not confined to "excluding Russia" from Europe. The deal made at Munich was intended to assist in the provocation of armed conflict between the fascist powers and the USSR.

Such was the British strategy of foreign relations at that time. But its realisation in practice was dependent upon many factors beyond the control of a Conservative Government. What if Germany acted not according to schedule, as laid down by London, and, under the banner of revanche, moved West first, as Eden had been warned in Moscow in 1935? Thoughts of such a possibility immediately brought to mind thoughts of the Soviet Union. Should there not be some re-insurance, taking advantage of the readiness of the USSR to link up with other countries to resist aggression?

The inconsistency shown by British politicians, beset as they were by doubts and fears, is quite amazing. Even Winston Churchill, whose positions were apparently the clearest and most well defined, was on May 31 speaking in favour of satisfying German claims on Czechoslovakia, and at the end of August trying to convince Halifax that Britain and France should join with the USSR in issuing a firm warning to Hitler.

By September 1938 a number of Conservatives, alarmed by Chamberlain's doings, were showing increased interest in possible cooperation with the USSR in the event of military conflict with Germany. On September 26 Amery discussed this matter with a group of other Conservatives and pleaded with them not to make any public statements supporting cooperation with the USSR. "At the moment," he said, "it would only put off many of our people, while once war is declared they will only too readily welcome help from the Devil himself." A notable way of putting it! It

sums up the feelings of Conservatives towards the USSR, and we shall meet it once more when referring to the speech made over the radio by the British Prime Minister on June 22, 1941.

On October 3 a four-day debate on the Munich Conference began in the House of Commons. It showed that a certain sobering-up had set in even among the ranks of Conservative MPs. One Cabinet member, First Lord of the Admiralty Duff Cooper, resigned in protest against the Munich Agreement. But he tried not to annoy Chamberlain too much in the process. When another Minister, Walter Elliot, suggested that he would also resign, Duff Cooper persuaded him not to do so.

Duff Cooper's speech in Parliament displays the main lines along which the dissatisfaction of some Conservatives with Munich was developing. The point, he said, was not so much Czechoslovakia, but Germany's intention to dominate Europe. Chamberlain was wrong in thinking that Hitler's word could be trusted. He ought not to have signed an important declaration without consulting his colleagues in the government, his Allies, the governments of the Dominions, or the experts of the Foreign Office.

Winston Churchill declared that Germany, without firing a shot, had achieved a dominating position in Europe, which she had failed to win after four years of fighting in the First World War. It was, he said, "a tremendous victory for Hitler... He has overturned the balance of power in Europe." There were quite a few similar speeches.

Thompson writes that Anthony Eden "delivered a weaker speech along the same lines, but his remarks were overshadowed by the impassioned and telling denunciations of his younger colleagues". This is too kind an assessment. For Eden began his speech with obsequious compliments to Chamberlain. At such a juncture, this was a political matter, not an ethical one. "Whatever the strain," Eden said, "...it was insignificant by comparison with the strain that rested ... upon my Right Honourable Friend the Prime Minister himself... Now for the moment we can breathe again." It was a species of support for the Prime Minister. Then Eden remarked that the reception accorded Chamberlain in Germany was "a manifestation of the deep desire of the German people for peace". This was outright support for Chamberlain's Nazi collaborator. Any ordinary British hearer would take the words as applying to the German

Government and to Hitler. It is a classical example of the deliberately ambiguous phrase.

Yet the overall mood of the House of Commons was bound to convey a warning. Chamberlain and his group were seriously worried. Threats were brought into play. The discontented were told that if they voted against the government, Chamberlain would immediately call a General Election, while the voters were still feeling grateful to him for "saving peace", and all those who now opposed the government would get thrown overboard. The Conservative Party would exclude them from its list of candidates, and if they stood as Independents everything possible would be done to see they lost the seats.

At the end of the debate there was a vote of confidence in the government. The Labour Opposition, naturally, voted against it. Twenty-two Conservatives abstained, in spite of the threats and blackmail. Among these were Amery, Churchill, Duff Cooper, Cranborne, Macmillan and Eden. Not one, neither Churchill, nor Duff Cooper, nor Eden, voted against the government's Munich deal.

Eden was playing his cards carefully. He was not active either inside or outside Parliament. But the few public utterances he did make showed that the speaker adhered to a definite programme. Eden was advancing the idea of a true coalition government in which all parties (not including the Communist Party, of course) would be represented; which would ensure social justice within the country and carry through an effective foreign policy abroad. The foggy phrases about above-class social justice were meant to catch popular attention and support. But Eden went no further than banal, commonplace catch-phrases in his home policy programme.

His concept of foreign policy is more clearly defined. Eden is still a supporter of "appeasement". But now his speeches also contain calls for Britain to re-arm without delay.

As before, Eden speaks of Germany and Italy responding to concessions made them by Britain by proving in deed that they were themselves ready to cooperate with her. It is the concept of "guaranteed appeasement".

A number of other Conservatives also considered that "appeasement" should have safeguards, that Hitler's and Mussolini's word alone should not be trusted. These were Back-Bench Members of Parliament. They began to meet

together more or less regularly, starting as early as the spring of 1938, in order to discuss foreign policy problems. These gatherings were known as those of "The Group".

Historians have been unable to establish an exact date for the formation of "The Group". It had no formal membership, no organisational structure, no officers. Its numbers were variable, and did not exceed 20 altogether. Besides Eden, those in "The Group" included Cranborne, Thomas, Patrick, Amery, Macmillan, Spears, Nicolson and others. "The Group" took no decisions binding upon its members. It was in effect a discussion group concerned with foreign policy. From the utterances of those in "The Group" one can conclude that they saw the methods of traditional diplomacy and the balance of power as more important than the government did.

The most formidable and consistent critic of Chamberlain's foreign policy at this time was Winston Churchill. One might think that Eden should have joined his efforts with those of Churchill, but he did not do this. "The Group" was chary of Churchill.

Eden's remarks on the desirability of forming an all-party government indicate beyond doubt that he wanted to return to power. Knowing his own reputation, Eden justifiably thought that if such a government were formed, he would be asked to join it. In that case the post of Foreign Secretary was assured him, and if he was very lucky he might even be asked to form a government as Prime Minister. Eden's authority in the country was growing, in step with the growing doubts in the public mind on the tenability of Chamberlain's policy.

To ensure himself against any danger from that quarter, the Prime Minister employed the traditional British method. He decided to lull Eden off, and offered him the chance to come back into the government, but not as Foreign Secretary. Eden gave it thought, and then refused. And he was quite right. Time was working against Chamberlain. Soon Eden came back into government on much better terms.

In December 1938 Eden and his wife made a trip to the United States. This too was a well-calculated step. Things were obviously moving towards war, a war in which the interests of Britain and of the USA would coincide for some time at least. Roosevelt was becoming more and more active in the sphere of foreign relations. All this meant that Anglo-American relations were becoming rapidly more

important. After the clash in January 1938 Roosevelt had no good-will for Chamberlain, which was one more reason for Eden to make an appearance in the United States and demonstrate his sympathies with the Americans.

Marked attention was paid to Eden by the Americans. Even the most famous film stars were not feted to such an extent. As soon as the liner *Aquitania* entered New York harbour, a coastguard service launch came alongside to take the Edens on shore. In the fashionable Waldorf Astoria Hotel there was a reception held in their honour. Some 4,000 persons came to see and hear Eden. The Mayor of New York, La Guardia, played host to the visitors from London. They went to see a play on Broadway in which Eden's name was mentioned by one of the characters. The newspapers were full of photographs of Eden, of descriptions of his suits, hats and ties. The Americans saw in Eden their ideal of an Englishman incarnate. They were surprised at his not carrying a black umbrella, though that was something Chamberlain, and indeed any English gentleman, was never without, whatever the weather. Carrying no umbrella was seen as a mark of their guest's liberalism.

Eden addressed the Annual Congress of American Industry and made speeches at innumerable dinners and receptions. He did not speak of anything of moment, but what he said was calculated to give his hearers the impression that he had feelings of sympathy towards the United States, that he was a supporter of democracy who realised the threat to it represented by the dictatorships. It was all put across in smooth, well-rounded phrases.

In Washington the Edens were received by Eleanor Roosevelt, the President's wife (there was no meeting with the President), and by Sumner Welles, the Under-Secretary of State. The typists in the White House followed him from room to room, entranced by the opportunity to see the charming English politician in person.

The Edens returned home in time for Christmas, pleased with their trip and bringing with them over 100 photographs of themselves clipped from American newspapers. "There were some, however," notes Bardens, "who felt this adulation was carried a little too far, and that Eden's reputation rested on an unsubstantial basis. He was being praised more for what he refused to do than for what he did."

While Eden was travelling abroad, Chamberlain had instituted a regime of harsh discipline among Conservative Mem-

bers of Parliament. He made a speech in the House of Commons which made it clear that he would not stand for the free-thinking attitudes shown by some people in the debate on Munich. Conservative agents in the constituencies demanded explanations from the "dissidents" and warned them in no uncertain terms that if they did not come to their senses they could not count on being candidates for those constituencies in the next election (which was due in a few months' time).

Some, like Winston Churchill for instance, postponed the moment of truth in their constituencies for as long as they possibly could. Some tried rebellion. When the Duchess of Atholl, indignant at the Party pressure put on her (she had displeased the Party bosses by criticising government policy on Spain), gave up the Party whip and tried to get elected as an Independent, she was promptly defeated. The "dissidents" grew thoughtful, and kept quiet.

Eden redoubled his caution. *The New Statesman* wrote: "He is playing ... for the leadership of the Conservative Party... He leaves the door open for possible combinations in the future." And the *Spectator*, commenting on Eden's constant refusal to indulge in recriminations towards his former government colleagues, noted that it was in itself a "source of strength". Those in "The Group" followed the example of their leader, and some of them did their best to convince the party bosses of their reliability.

This was not too difficult, especially for Eden. David Carlton, summing up Eden's record on foreign policy in the thirties, remarks that the "distinctions between 'appeasers' and 'anti-appeasers' in the Conservative Party were less sharp than has been popularly supposed... It has been argued here [in Carlton's book—*V. T.*], for example, that Eden initially formed a relatively favourable impression of Hitler, that he took a less vigorous line on Abyssinia than has often been supposed: that his policies on the Rhineland and the Spanish Civil War were substantially his own ... and that he adopted a less than thoroughgoing attitude in his opposition to Chamberlain after his resignation."

On March 15, 1939, Hitler moved his troops into Czechoslovakia and occupied her territory. This was done without agreement with the countries that had taken part in the Munich Conference. Thus Hitler *ipso facto* tore up the Munich Agreement, and the notorious Anglo-German declaration as well. It meant the complete failure of the policy of "ap-

peasement". It was now clear that Germany could not be placated by concessions, that she was out to achieve dominance in Europe. "The latest exploit of Herr Hitler," wrote the *Spectator*, "will convince the country ... of the value of the Munich Agreement. Not only is the policy of appeasement dead ... but it must be hastily buried."

At this point the British Government betrayed Czechoslovakia yet again. For at Munich Chamberlain had promised to guarantee her post-Munich frontiers. Although the British Government was aware that Hitler intended to seize Czechoslovakia ("For weeks or even months beforehand it was not difficult to guess what Hitler's next move might be," wrote Cadogan), was well aware even of the time limits when it would take place, it did nothing to hinder it. In fact a French proposal to send a note of warning to Hitler was greeted with stony rejection in London.

After his meetings with Hitler, Chamberlain had assured his Ministers: "I got the impression that here was a man who could be relied upon" and that Hitler was "extremely anxious to secure the friendship of Great Britain". Two or three months later, and we read, in a document issued with Chamberlain's approval, that "Hitler's mental condition, his insensate rage against Great Britain" provide evidence that he might "make a sudden air attack without pretext on England". That document is dated January 24, 1939.

What had happened during the four months since Munich? "As early as November [1938]," says the above-quoted document, "there were indications which became more definite that Hitler was planning a further foreign adventure for the spring of 1939. At first it appeared ... that he was thinking of expansion to the East ... An independent Ukraine under German vassalage was freely spoken of in Germany."

So that was what they were hoping for in London! More than once in Cadogan's *Diaries* (the published version, that is!) one finds remarks on the Foreign Office belief in "their project for acquiring a dominant position in the Ukraine". That means that in Downing Street they were impatiently awaiting a German attack on the USSR (for how else could Germany lay hands on the Ukraine?), awaiting, that is, the pay-off for handing over Czechoslovakia. But by the end of January 1939 the British Government had so much evidence of the fact that Hitler was disregarding them that they began to visualise in earnest the possibility that Germany might strike against the West. But despite that,

the Chamberlain Government did nothing to prevent Hitler's seizure of Czechoslovakia on March 15.

Soon after London and Paris had had to "swallow" the take-over of Czechoslovakia, Hitler seized Memel from Lithuania, and Mussolini appropriated Albania. The shift in the balance of power in favour of the aggressor countries was now proceeding with fantastic speed.

Reactions in Britain to these events varied. Chamberlain even now refused to change his line. But popular indignation was increasing, and with it the pressure on Members of Parliament. It was already clear to many that the policy of "appeasement" had brought Britain and France to the brink of disaster: they must now either accept German domination in Europe, or start a war against Germany under conditions much worse than they would have been in, say, 1936, when German aggression could have been halted comparatively easily.

At this period the idea of utilising the might of the USSR to redress the balance of power was becoming more popular in unofficial political circles. This idea now started to influence Eden's thinking also to some degree.

In the second half of March 1939 it had already become clear that Nazi Germany's next victim was to be Poland. British ruling circles, for all their sympathies towards fascism, could not view calmly a further possible shift in the balance of power to Britain's disadvantage. To give the German Government a fright and make it more cooperative Chamberlain—who was now posing as having been a "sadly deceived apostle of appeasement"—announced on March 31 that Britain (with France following her example) guaranteed the independence of Poland. After Mussolini's take-over of Albania guarantees were also given to Greece and Rumania, and talks about guarantees were begun with Turkey.

Many thousands of books and articles have been written to demonstrate that after March 15 the policy of "appeasement" was dead, that the British Government changed to a new course. The falsity of this version of events has been shown repeatedly by Marxist, and not only Marxist, historians. The policy of "appeasement" continued until September 1939, and after that till May 1940; Chamberlain's "guarantees" were a tactical ploy only, with two aims: to soothe public opinion, and to exert influence on the governments of Germany and Italy to impel them towards making a real agree-

ment with Britain at last. The same aims were behind the Anglo-Franco-Soviet talks which took place in the spring and summer of 1939.

Did there exist at the time an objective possibility of concluding an alliance between Britain, France and the USSR, against German aggression? Yes, beyond doubt there did. In the first place, the Soviet Union had on more than one occasion demonstrated its sincere readiness to take part in a system of collective security which might have halted the approaching war; in the second, the USSR, Britain and France were all under the threat from Germany and so they all had a common interest in averting that threat. It might seem that in such a situation there was only one rational course open to Britain and France—to form a united front with the USSR against aggression. At that stage it was still possible to save the situation. But in London and Paris they still went on with a gambling game in which the stakes were the fate of countries and peoples.

Under pressure from public opinion, the governments of the Western powers began to mask their policy by employing very simple diplomatic devices: official personages in London and in Paris became frequent guests of the Soviet Embassies there, and such visits were widely publicised. But this did not cause any misapprehensions in Moscow. M. M. Litvinov wrote to the Soviet Ambassador in London on this score: "I think you have no illusions concerning Anglo-Soviet relations and do not give undue weight to the acceptance of your lunch invitations by members of the government. It often happens that a hidden but essential deterioration in relations is meant to be compensated by easy public manifestations of correct behaviour, which is what is happening in the given case." On February 19, 1939, the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs noted, in the record of a conversation he had had with the British Ambassador: "I indicated to the Ambassador that as yet I see no signs of a change from the course made apparent at Munich." Litvinov summed up thus: "We have to do solely with gestures and tactical manoeuvres, not with any real desire on Chamberlain's part to cooperate with us." The Soviet Government, thus, was well aware of the double game being played by the men of Munich.

Some historians think that talks between the Soviet Union and Britain and France regarding an alliance to restrain further German aggression in Europe began on March 18,

1939, and that the initiative in these talks belonged to the British Government. It would probably be more correct to consider that talks with that object began one month later, and that the initiative was from the Soviet Union.

If one looks carefully at the import of the diplomatic correspondence and talks between representatives of these three powers in the period March 18-April 17, one cannot fail to conclude that during that month the governments of Britain and France were not conducting talks about an alliance, but were making efforts to provoke the USSR into taking diplomatic measures towards Germany which would have caused a further deterioration in Soviet-German relations and have urged Hitler into abandoning his plans for making his first strike in the West, and instead launching an armed attack upon the Soviet Union.

In the language of the documents themselves the facts appear thus. In connection with the increasing pressure being put by Germany upon Romania (Hitler was attempting to wring important economic and political concessions out of the Romanians) the British Government on March 18 addressed an enquiry, through the Soviet Ambassador in London and simultaneously through the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs in Moscow, to find out whether Romania could count upon the help of the Soviet Union in the event of German aggression, and if so in what form and on what scale. M. M. Litvinov replied that the Soviet Government "may also feel the need to know, before replying to the enquiry made by Seeds [the British Ambassador to the USSR—V. T.], what the position of other states, in particular Britain, may be". The People's Commissar "expressed surprise that Britain and not Romania should interest itself in our aid, Romania having made no approach to us and possibly even having no wish for our help". However, as the Soviet Government did not wish to neglect any chance whatever of holding talks with the Western powers on joint resistance to aggression, it decided to make this enquiry from the British the occasion of an important proposal of its own on urgent measures to avert aggression.

In the evening of that same day M.M. Litvinov summoned Seeds and handed him a Soviet proposal "for the immediate convocation of a conference at which the USSR, Britain, France, Poland and Romania would be represented". The People's Commissar explained to the Ambassador that "enquiries from one government to another regarding the

position of each will yield nothing, and it is therefore necessary to have a general consultation". An American historian, Fleming, has since evaluated the Soviet action thus: "This was exactly and obviously what was urgently needed." But it was not what British politicians wanted. Promptly, the next day in fact, the British Foreign Secretary informed the Soviet Ambassador that he had consulted the Prime Minister concerning the conference proposal, and that they had come to the conclusion that such an action would be "premature". Thus a concrete, business-like Soviet proposal for combating aggression was rejected by the British side.

On March 21 Seeds transmitted to Litvinov a draft, very vaguely phrased, for a declaration to be made by the USSR, Britain, France and Poland, that these countries bound themselves to consult on the steps that should be taken for united resistance to aggression. On the principle that "anything is better than nothing", the Soviet Government the next day informed the government of Great Britain that it accepted the latter's proposal. But the British side first delayed its answer, and then announced that the question of a declaration must be held to have fallen to the ground.

At first sight the British position seems inconsistent and hard to understand, but it had a logic of its own. One must consult the British sources of that period in order to find its rationale. Let us look at one of these. David Dilks, the publisher of Cadogan's *Diaries*, quotes the following document, prepared by Cadogan for the Foreign Office in February 1939: I ... think it otiose to discuss whether Fascism or Communism is the more dangerous to us. It is quite plain that, *at the moment* [Cadogan's emphasis—V.T.] that former is the more dangerous." Further on Cadogan declares: "I abominate ... Communism (as practised in Russia)." This is an important document, for it sets forth, not so much Cadogan's own opinion but the position of the Foreign Office and the government—their permanent position: they remained true to it in 1939, during the years of the anti-Hitler coalition and in the post-war period. It unites profound hatred of the Soviet Union and the awareness that cooperation with it was essential for their own survival.

Nor can one leave out of reckoning the fact that popular demands for united action with the USSR to rebuff aggression were growing with every day in Britain, and to a

slightly lesser extent in France. To soothe the masses, Chamberlain made gestures in the direction of the Soviet Government, and when his demarches produced results hastily went back on them, for he was not seeking an alliance with the USSR against the aggressor, but to make a deal with the latter against the USSR. The British Prime Minister engaged in outright deception of his own people in order to conceal the government's true position. On March 24 Cadogan wrote in his diary: "Had to be at No. 10 at 9.45—P.M. talking to Labour. He explained ... that we weren't cold-shouldering Russia."

As for the French Government, it was displaying no activity as yet. M.M. Litvinov wrote to the Soviet Ambassador in Paris, Y.Z. Surits: "France, so far as we are concerned, seems to have opted out completely, leaving even the talks with us to Britain alone." And Britain was conducting the talks for the look of things, which the Soviet Government understood perfectly well. "Indeed," wrote Litvinov to Surits, "in the talks the British and the French are having with us, since the business of the joint declaration there has not been so much as a hint of any concrete proposal or any agreement with us. If one deciphers the real meaning of these talks, all that emerges is a desire on the part of Britain and France to get from us, without entering into any agreement and without undertaking any obligations themselves, promises that would be binding upon us... But why should we take upon ourselves such unilateral commitments?" The disingenuous nature of the Western powers' position was clear to Moscow even then, in the period prior to the secret talks.

On April 15 the British Government addressed an enquiry to the Soviet Government as to whether the latter would make a declaration that, in the event of any act of aggression against any European neighbour of the Soviet Union, the assistance of the Soviet Government would be available, if desired. This proposal was in essence a provocation. Its authors were inviting the USSR to declare that in certain circumstances it would go to war with Germany, while they themselves did not promise to give it any support. It was none other than an attempt to draw the Soviet Union into war with Germany—a war she was to conduct single-handed.

If the British Government had no real intention of organising a front of resistance to aggression, the Soviet Government on the contrary did have such intentions. It therefore took

the opportunity offered by the British proposal in order to convey to the governments of Britain and France, on April 17, 1939, proposals of its own providing that all three powers undertake the obligation to render to one another immediate aid of all kinds, including military aid, in the event of aggression in Europe against any one of them. It was the presentation of these proposals by the Soviet Government which initiated the tripartite negotiations on conclusion of a defensive military alliance against aggression in Europe between the USSR, Britain and France.

It was a constructive step on the part of the Soviet Government. The American historian, Fleming, describes the Soviet proposal of April 17 as "starkly realistic". "Nothing less," he writes, "offered any hope of stopping Germany without war, or of winning it if Hitler persisted." That the Soviet Government was sincere and its proposals seriously meant was accepted as beyond doubt by many diplomats accredited to Moscow.

Moscow knew that London and Paris were showing some activity in the field of foreign relations for tactical reasons only, taking steps intended to show that their line had changed, while in reality their intention was still to bring about a fresh deal with Hitler. What considerations, then, moved the Soviet Government, when it offered Britain and France an alliance against aggression? Firstly, it believed that public opinion in the Western countries would bring pressure to bear on their governments to cooperate with the USSR; secondly, it took cognisance of the inter-imperialist rivalries which made it difficult for any agreement to be reached between Britain and France, on the one hand, and Germany and Italy, on the other; and thirdly and lastly, it considered it essential to take up any chance, even the slightest, of trying to create a united front of states and peoples against the threat of fascism and war. It was an entirely correct policy, and if the efforts of the Soviet Government did not meet with success at that stage, it was purely because support for them, from the forces in the West which were striving to avert the threat of war, was insufficiently strong.

And what was the reaction in London to the Soviet proposals? Cadogan set out his opinion for Halifax, the essence of it being that he doubted Russia's military aid. "We have to balance," adjudged Cadogan, "the advantage of a paper commitment by Russia to join in a war on one side

against the disadvantage of associating ourselves openly with Russia. The advantage is, to say the least, problematical." Halifax approved this reasoning.

On April 19 there was a meeting of the Foreign Policy Committee to discuss what Cadogan described as the "mischievous" Soviet proposals. Cadogan's views gained "general approval", and he sent a telegram to the French, "urging them not to reply to the Soviets before consulting us".

On April 21 Halifax informed the Polish Ambassador in London, Raczynski, that the Soviet proposals, while important, went further than the British Government wished to go.

On April 25 the Foreign Policy Committee discussed the answer to be sent to Moscow. The meeting of the FPC didn't last long, wrote Cadogan, all agreed to turn the Soviet proposals down.

On May 8 the British Government proposed to the Soviet Government, instead of a tripartite agreement on mutual aid, that the Soviet Government should make a unilateral declaration that in the event of Britain and France being drawn into hostilities, the Soviet Union would consider itself bound to immediately render them assistance. Not a word of what the Soviet Union could count on from Britain and France. "As you see," ran a telegram sent to the Soviet Ambassador in France by V.M. Molotov, who in May 1939 had succeeded M.M. Litvinov as People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, "the British and the French are demanding unilateral and free aid from us, without binding themselves to render equivalent aid to us."

A week later the Soviet Government informed its partners in the talks that, having given careful consideration to their proposals, it had reached the following conclusion: these proposals "cannot provide a basis for the organisation of a resistance front by the peaceful states against the further spread of aggression in Europe", for "they do not embody the principle of mutuality in relation to the USSR and place it in an unequal position, since they do not provide for any undertakings by Britain and France to guarantee the USSR in the event of a direct attack upon it by the aggressors". Simultaneously the Soviet Government put forward proposals which if taken up would have created an effective barrier against aggression.

On May 19 the new Soviet proposals were considered by the Foreign Policy Committee. "We are coming up," notes Cadogan, "against choice between Soviet alliance (or pact

of mutual assistance) and breakdown—with all consequences... P.M. (Prime Minister) hates it. O. Stanley, S. Hoare, M. MacDonald, Chatfield, I think Inskip, Burgin in favour of it. To them I think I should add H. [Halifax]. P.M., S. Morrison and (?) J. Simon against. All agreed it must be Cabinet decision. Also agreed that our bull point against Russian proposals was Polish and Romanian dislike of association with Russia." A day later Cadogan wrote: "P.M. says he will resign rather than sign alliance with the Soviets." So the new Soviet proposal was also rejected by the British Government, and later by the French.

The Soviet Government was aware that its partners in the talks were engaged in insincerity. V. M. Molotov made this awareness clear in a conversation he had with the British and French diplomatic representatives in Moscow on May 27. The record of this conversation says: "In answer to Seeds and Payart, Cde. Molotov began by declaring that after making himself acquainted with the Anglo-French draft, he had given it a negative evaluation. The Anglo-French draft not only failed to include any plan for organisation of effective mutual aid between the USSR, Britain and France against aggression in Europe, it offered no evidence even of any serious interest on the part of the British and French Governments in concluding a corresponding pact with the USSR. The Anglo-French proposals lead one to suppose that the governments of Britain and France are interested not so much in a pact as in talks about one. Possibly Britain and France need these talks for some purposes. These purposes are not known to the Soviet Government. It is interested not in talks about a pact, but in organising effective mutual assistance of the USSR, Britain and France against aggression in Europe. To take part merely in talks about a pact, talks the object of which is unknown to the USSR, is not the intention of the Soviet Government. The British and French Governments may conduct such talks with more suitable partners than the USSR." Probably some felt the tone of this statement to be rather too sharp. But today, in the light of documents now published which were previously secret, it is absolutely clear that such a tone was entirely justified in speaking to diplomats who were playing a double game.

British Government documents tell us of the discussion in London of the matter of sending a special representative to Moscow to carry on talks. We know how Chamberlain went

in person, three times, to Hitler in order to reach the Munich Agreement. Later he went to Rome to see Mussolini. To the USSR, to hold talks on the creation of an alliance to preserve peace in Europe, they sent a low-ranking official of the Foreign Office, William Strang. If the British Government had been serious about the talks, they would have been entrusted to, at least, the Foreign Secretary. After all, on the Soviet side they were being conducted by the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars. In Moscow they were ready to receive Halifax, but he refused to go. When the matter was discussed in Cabinet in July 1939 and the possibility of sending a Minister was raised, Chamberlain declared that that would be very difficult as it would cause serious delay and would be humiliating to the British Government.

At this time Anthony Eden began to speak of the vital need for "a tripartite alliance between Britain, France and Russia based on complete reciprocity; that is to say, that if Russia were attacked, we and France would go to her help, and if we or France were attacked, Russia would come to our aid". Eden considered that the three powers should also be prepared to help any other European nation that became a victim of aggression. Early in May Eden spoke in the House of Commons on the need to conclude an agreement with the USSR as soon as possible.

A few days later he met Halifax for lunch. The conversation turned to the proposed talks. "Why don't you go to Moscow, Edward, and lead a delegation?" asked Eden. "I should be no good whatsoever," replied Halifax. "They are not my kind of people. Absolutely no *rapprochement* with them whatsoever." Eden pointed out that Chamberlain had gone to see Hitler three times, and noted that if the British delegation were headed by someone of stature, the Russians would take it as evidence that there was no prejudice against them in London. Then Eden said: "If it were agreeable to the Government, I would be willing to go myself." Halifax made a show of liking the idea, and promised to mention it to the Prime Minister. Soon Eden learned that Chamberlain was not willing to let him go to the USSR.

In spite of everything, agreement was reached in Moscow on a number of controversial issues, thanks to the firmness and persistence of the Soviet Government.

One subject of serious divergence of opinion was the question of a military agreement. In the opinion of the Soviet Government, this ought to be an integral part of the

political treaty. But the governments of Britain and France, seeking to avoid taking any concrete obligations upon themselves, tried to postpone the matter of a military agreement to an indefinite date in the future. In a telegram to the Soviet Ambassadors in London and Paris, V.M. Molotov referred to the Anglo-French proposal that agreement should first be reached on the "political" part of the treaty and that only thereafter should the parties "pass on to the military agreement", as trickery, since it "tears the single treaty up into two treaties" and ran counter to the principal Soviet proposal on simultaneous conclusion of the treaty as a whole, including its military agreement, "which is the most important and the most political part of the treaty". "You will understand," wrote the People's Commissar, "that without an absolutely concrete military agreement as an integral part of the entire treaty, the treaty would be transformed into an empty declaration, something we will not agree to. Only rogues and tricksters, such as the gentlemen engaged in the talks on the Anglo-French side are all this time showing themselves to be, can hypocritically pretend that our demand for simultaneous conclusion of a political and military agreement is something new in the negotiations, and even start a canard in the press to the effect that we are demanding the military agreement in advance, i.e. before concluding the political agreement. One can only wonder what they hope to gain by launching into such misguided stratagems in the negotiations. It looks as though nothing will come out of these endless talks. Then they will have only themselves to blame."

The justice of this assessment is confirmed by a despatch sent by Strang to the British Government on July 20. "Their [i.e. the Soviet representatives]—V.T.] distrust and suspicion of us has not diminished during the negotiations, nor ... has their respect for us increased. The fact that we have raised difficulty after difficulty on points which seem to them unessential has created an impression that we may not be seriously seeking an agreement." Indeed, the Western powers were not seeking an agreement with the USSR. It is true that the French Government displayed greater readiness than the British to reach agreement with the Soviet Union.

Chamberlain was seeking not alliance with the USSR, but a new deal with Hitler. In parallel with the talks in Moscow, talks with German representatives were going on in London, in deepest secrecy. As early as March 1939 M. M. Litvinov,

bearing in mind the nature of British foreign policy, had foreseen the possibility of such talks. He considered that the British Government would use its contacts with the USSR as a means of "stepping up the process of setting Hitler against the East: 'Either you go East, or else we shall get together with them against you.'"

In the first few months after Munich Chamberlain's Cabinet tried to get talks with the Nazis started, but the latter preferred to listen only and say nothing themselves. In the summer of 1939 London was more insistent in raising the matter of talks. Hitler was offered a carefully worked-out programme for such talks, and tempted with promises of major concessions.

The London Government's efforts for an agreement with Nazi Germany reached their peak in July 1939. This time it was Horace Wilson—Chamberlain's trusted aide—who was in charge of the negotiations. He offered the German representative, Wohltat, a wide-ranging programme for negotiations. One of the sections envisaged confirmation of the non-aggression pact which had been in existence between Britain and Germany since the time of the Munich Agreement. By way of recompense for this, the British side promised to renege on the guarantees it had given to Poland and Rumania, i.e. it was prepared to betray those countries to the Nazis. Germany was promised a radical revision of the Treaty of Versailles in the part relating to colonies. The section on "Military Questions" provided for the attainment of agreements on armaments and for "a joint policy" towards "third countries". The section on "Economic Questions" was the most carefully elaborated of all. Germany was offered a joint policy in the area of supply of raw materials to both countries, and in the division of the principal markets for their goods. In the opinion of the British side, the result of cooperation between the two governments would be free play for the development of economic forces in Europe and throughout the world under the leadership of Germany and Britain. This planned German-British cooperation was to affect three major market areas in particular: the British Empire (especially India, South Africa, Canada and Australia); China (in cooperation with Japan); and Russia.

London was thus offering Berlin an agreement on the economic division of Europe and of the world. The Nazis were even being offered a share in the economic exploitation of the British Empire.

The British plan envisaged the creation of a colonial condominium in Africa. Joint opening-up was envisaged of immense areas in tropical and subtropical Africa. These might include Togo, Nigeria, Cameroon, the Congo, Kenya, Tanganyika (German East Africa), Portuguese and Spanish West and East Africa and Northern Rhodesia. What was proposed for these territories included organisation of processing of raw materials and of food production; capital investment and foreign trade arrangements; reform of the currency system and of communications; administrative management and military and police control.

It is notable that in considering the exploitation of China, those in Downing Street were prepared to reach an agreement with one more aggressive power—Japan.

The British policy-makers saw the Soviet Union too as one of the markets which was to be jointly “developed” by Britain and Germany. One can only marvel at the political blindness prevalent in London, where they had not the slightest conception of what the Soviet Union had become by 1939, but saw it as entirely possible to force upon the USSR the status of a semi-colony and raw materials appendage to the capitalist powers.

The British Government offered Nazi Germany credits and the position of co-partners in the struggle against their imperialist rivals.

This British plan for an all-embracing agreement with Hitler embodied arch-reactionary designs aimed at many countries and peoples. One cannot ignore that this was to be an agreement not just with Germany, but with Nazi Germany. This meant that in offering the Nazis joint exploitation of a number of countries, the British Government was promising to facilitate the inculcation of fascist influence there. The British plan was thus bound to bring in its train the extension and firmer establishment of fascism in Europe and in other continents; and this was against the interests of the British people as well. If this plan had been realised, grave harm would have been done to the cause of progress and democracy, and the positions of reaction would have been significantly strengthened; the exploitation of working people in the developed countries, and the oppression of the colonial peoples, would have been sharply increased.

The fate of one of the most important documents of this period—the memorandum handed to the Germans by Horace Wilson during his secret talks with the Nazi emissary—is

interesting. It was on paper headed with the address of the Prime Minister. After this memorandum was published following the Second World War, A.J.P. Taylor devoted a special article in *The New Statesman* to it. According to Taylor, Horace Wilson "recorded his version ... for the benefit of the Foreign Office; and it duly appeared in the British Documents". From this record it followed that it was "a harmless conversation indeed: merely the usual theme of readiness to be friendly to Germany as soon as Hitler reverted to peaceful methods".

But the German documents, when published, showed that this was a matter of highly important proposals, approved by Chamberlain and transmitted by Wilson to the Nazis. It was a full programme of cooperation, sharing of foreign markets, industrial and financial partnership. Taylor posed the question: "What ... has happened to the memorandum, since it has escaped the editors of the British Documents? Was it suppressed by Sir Horace Wilson? Or by Neville Chamberlain? Obviously many people would be glad for it to disappear."

The agreement proposed by Britain was never reached, owing to extreme exacerbation of the contradictions between the two countries. London was offering German Nazism enormous concessions, but in Berlin they dreamt of still greater things—of gaining sole dominance over the whole world—and so they declined to accept the British proposals.

The British plan for an agreement with Nazi Germany reveals the full perfidy of British diplomacy. Naturally its double game prevented the success of the Moscow talks, and it again was the reason for the lack of results from negotiations which began in August 1939 between the Military Missions of the USSR, Britain and France.

In July the Western powers had discussed the matter of breaking off the talks with the USSR. To do so seemed desirable to them, firstly, because the Soviet Government was utilising the talks to expose the hypocrisy of its opposite numbers, which created difficulties at home for the latter, and secondly, it would be one more gesture to prove their readiness to reach agreement with Germany. On July 12 Seeds sent a telegram to Halifax saying that in order to get the talks broken off it would be better to use the question of "indirect aggression", rather than that of the military agreement.

But an open break was none the less felt to be dangerous.

The Soviet proposal that talks should be started between the military missions from the three countries was accepted—accepted so that the talks might thus be dragged on endlessly. Under the circumstances it was equivalent to breaking them off.

The British and French military missions arrived in Moscow after deliberate delays and without powers to decide on or sign anything (the British military representatives had in fact no powers at all). They had been given just two clear instructions: to drag on the talks for as long as possible, and to try, in the course of them, to acquire exhaustive data on the state of the Soviet armed forces. The German Ambassador in London telegraphed to his Foreign Ministry on August 1: "The Military, Air and Naval Attachés are unanimous in noting the strikingly sceptical attitude shown by the British military regarding the forthcoming talks with representatives of the Soviet armed forces. One cannot avoid forming the impression that on the British side the talks are being conducted primarily in order to gain, eventually, a picture of the real military strength of the Soviet armed forces."

On August 3 the Soviet Ambassador in France reported to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, on the basis of conversations with responsible officials in Paris, that the French mission "was leaving for Moscow without any plan having been worked out. This is disquieting, and lessens confidence in the serious nature of the talks... The reasons for all this lie in the fact that here and in London they are far from having given up hope of reaching agreement with Berlin, and look on agreement with the USSR not as a means of 'breaking Germany', but merely as a means of creating better positions for themselves in future talks with Germany."

Before long the same Ambassador was passing on the information that the head of the French mission, General Doumenc, was none too pleased with the parting injunctions he had been given at the Quai d'Orsay: "Nothing clear or definite," he said; "they went no further than generalised clichés and platitudes"; and "one gets the impression that the guidance of the military talks, as of the political ones, will be in the hands of the British". And indeed that was how it worked out.

The talks between the military missions opened with an exchange of information on the state of the armed forces of

the three powers and on their strategic plans so far as Europe was concerned. The Soviet delegation provided an impressive outline of the contribution that could be made by the Red Army in the struggle against aggression in Europe. As Doumenc reported to Paris on August 17, "the declarations made by the Soviet delegation were specific and included many numerical facts... In a word, we recognise a clearly expressed intention [on the part of the Soviet Union—V.T.] not to stand aside, but on the contrary to take serious action." The French general was right. The USSR did intend seriously to take action in alliance with Britain and France.

In the course of the negotiations it was expounded that the Soviet Union would be bound to render assistance with its armed forces to Britain, France and their allies, Poland and Romania, in the event of Germany attacking these countries. But everyone knew that the USSR had no common frontier with Germany and that the Red Army could only operate over the territories of Poland and Romania. This was an obvious fact, and without taking account of it no talks were possible about mutual assistance between the three powers. Without Poland's consent to let the Red Army pass through her territory any agreement, military or political, on joint action against the aggressor would be left hanging in mid-air. Equally, how could the Soviet Union help Romania in the case of a German attack upon her, if the Red Army was unable to use the Romanian territory in order to bring its units into contact with the enemy?

When the head of the Soviet military delegation, K.Y. Voroshilov, put the question as to whether Britain and France had the appropriate consent from Poland and Romania, the British and French delegations replied in the negative. The Soviet side then proposed that the governments of Britain and France should assure themselves of such consent, if they wished to conclude a military convention with the USSR.

The record of the talks for August 21 gives K.Y. Voroshilov's statement as follows: "The Soviet military mission cannot picture to itself how the Governments and General Staffs of Britain and France, in sending their missions to the USSR for discussions to arrange a military convention, could not have given them precise and positive instructions on such an elementary matter as the passage and action of Soviet armed forces against the troops of the aggressor, on the territory of Poland and Romania, with which Britain

and France have corresponding military and political agreements. If, however, this axiomatic question is turned by the British and French into a great problem, demanding long study, this can only show that there is every reason to doubt their desire to come to serious and effective military cooperation with the USSR."

This was a perfectly justified statement of the question, indeed the only one possible. Incidentally, the British and French diplomatic representatives in Moscow also saw it as such. Seeds, the British Ambassador, sent a telegram to Halifax saying that the Russians had raised the fundamental problem on which military talks would succeed or fail. He stressed that as the British had taken engagements with regard to Poland and Rumania, the Soviet delegation was justified in putting on Britain and France the onus of approaching those countries. The French Ambassador, Payart, wrote that one could hardly oppose anything to the Soviet position, which brought one to the heart of the matter.

But the governments of the Western powers, the British in particular, did not take the measure needed for a sensible solution of the questions arising during the military talks. In London they did not in fact want to solve those questions, because they did not want the Moscow talks to produce any positive results. When the head of the British military mission, Admiral Drax, transmitted to his government the enquiry made by the Soviet delegation, Halifax said at a Cabinet meeting that he did not think it right to send any answer to these questions.

Thus did the governments of Britain and France wreck the 1939 talks with the USSR on the conclusion of an alliance to resist further aggression in Europe. It was clear to the Soviet Government that the statesmen of London and Paris acted thus with one object in view—that of continuing their Munich policy of agreement with fascism, and urging Hitler on to attack the USSR.

Under these circumstances the Soviet Government, not wishing to play into the hands of those who would provoke a new war, and striving to safeguard the interests of its own peoples, took the only step possible under the existing circumstances, and signed a non-aggression pact with Germany. By this act the military onslaught of fascism upon the USSR was delayed for almost two years, which the Party and the government utilised for the preparation

of the country, the people and their armed forces for the impending war.

The foreign policy of imperialist countries and the false representation of that policy are intimately connected. The latter has two stages: the first stage is false representation of the policy while it is being applied, and the second is falsification of the history of the given policy, made subsequently over a more or less lengthy period of time. And the assiduity of the falsifiers' efforts depends on the greater or lesser significance of the given acts of foreign policy by this or that government in the history of countries and peoples and in international relations.

The ruling circles of Britain and France have consciously distorted the picture presented to the peoples of their own actions at the time of the Munich deal, over the months following Munich, and lastly, over the months preceding the start of the Second World War. Using all the means of propaganda and of politics at their disposal, the men of Munich have perpetrated a deception as to their policy upon the British and French peoples, and upon world public opinion, which is gross in its scale and cynicism. Although the "elasticity" of the bourgeois politicians' conscience is well known, it would, however, be wrong to think that this malicious misrepresentation is to be explained by dishonest or dishonourable conduct on the part of particular figures on the political scene—Chamberlain, say, or Halifax.

Imperialist foreign policy is the product, however hard bourgeois historiography and propaganda may try to prove the contrary, of the actions not of particular individuals who work out and carry through the policy, but of the objective interests of the classes in power in the countries concerned; in the present case, of the monopoly bourgeoisie of Britain and France. This policy cannot but radically clash with the objective interests of the working people of those countries, i.e. the overwhelming majority of the populations of Britain and France.

So in order to get the peoples to accept some acts or others of imperialist foreign policy, or at least not resist them actively, the imperialists try to present their foreign policy in a false light, or to put it more simply, to deceive the peoples. The facts of international relations on the eve of the Second World War show that such deception was especially intensive at that time; the ruling cliques quite calculatingly and cynically misled not only their peoples

but their Parliaments and even their own colleagues in government. This was necessary because the smaller the number of persons knowing the ruling group's real intention, the greater the hopes that the deception would not be prematurely exposed. Caution had also to be observed with political figures belonging to the ruling parties, even if they were in disagreement with the policy being followed and in open opposition to it.

The political and military talks in Moscow in the summer of 1939 contained in themselves an element of falsification, inasmuch as the parties negotiating with the USSR were carrying on the negotiations as a blind to cover up their still-continuing policy of making a deal with the aggressor. In the period prior to the talks, when public opinion in Britain was becoming ever more insistent in its demands for normalisation of relations with the USSR and joint struggle with it against the threat of war, the London government was busy building up, as we have noted, a façade of seemingly improving Anglo-Soviet relations.

When the talks started, the British and the French press kept silence on the Soviet proposals. The Soviet Ambassador telegraphed from London: "There is a strange game in progress over our proposals. To begin with, Chamberlain tried to keep silent about them." Then came the tactic of one-sided, distorted presentation of Moscow's proposals to the public.

The moral and psychological build-up to the wrecking of the Moscow talks and to the organisation of a new Munich was distinguished by attempts to make public opinion favourably inclined towards the aggressive forces, while the deal with the aggressor was to be concluded secretly from the peoples.

False representation of policy leads inevitably to false historical representation of that policy. Bourgeois historiography is continuing the work of the bourgeois politicians, depicting the events of the past in a light favourable to the ruling classes. As a rule, it employs many arguments already advanced in politics and propaganda, providing convincing proof of the very direct link that exists between politics, propaganda and historiography.

Bourgeois historians assert (though with varying degrees of definiteness) that the fascists were able to unleash the Second World War by attacking Poland on September 1, 1939, because the Soviet Union had concluded a non-aggres-

sion pact with Germany. Anthony Eden also did not refrain from such assertions. In the part of his Memoirs dealing with the war he says of the German-Soviet pact: "I had to say it meant war."

We have shown above the perseverance with which the Soviet Union strove to conclude an agreement with Britain and France on joint resistance to the threat of a new world war. Such an agreement could have averted war, but it was not concluded because the governments of Britain and France did not want it. The more sober-minded among bourgeois historians also come to the conclusion that the USSR did sincerely want an alliance with Britain and France and that if this had been achieved, a decisive barrier against war would have been created in Europe. A.J.P. Taylor says: "Soviet Russia sought security in Europe, not conquests... The explanation lies on the surface: the Soviet statesmen ... distrusted Hitler. Alliance with the Western Powers seemed the safer course... We may safely guess that the Soviet Government turned to Germany only when this alliance proved impossible."

Decades have passed since the start of the Second World War, and in our own day we find an English newspaper, *The Guardian*, writing: "The Cabinet papers for 1939, published this morning, show that the Second World War would not have started in that year if ... the Chamberlain Government had accepted ... Russian advice that an alliance between Britain, France, and the Soviet Union would prevent war, because Hitler could not then risk a conflict against major powers on two fronts." So why, then, was such an alliance not concluded? The newspaper gives this answer: "Chamberlain wanted Russian help if Hitler attacked Poland. But Chamberlain did not want to commit Britain to go to Russia's aid if Hitler attacked Russia. The Russians insisted on a straightforward pact of mutual assistance linked with military talks. There were variations, but this was the main disagreement." There you have an opinion from a source which is far from being predisposed in the Soviet Union's favour.

Through the spring and summer of 1939 a further shift was taking place in Eden's view of his country's situation internationally. The tearing-up of the Munich Agreements by Germany in March 1939 convinced him that the policy of "appeasement" had placed Britain and France in an extremely dangerous position. Eden therefore began to put

forward the view that an end must be put to fascism's attempts to extend its conquests in Europe while intimidating Britain by threats of war. The German Government should be told, clearly and firmly, that if it continued to push forward towards domination in Europe, Britain and France would resist by force of arms.

Early in the summer Eden made a public speech in France in which he said that the British and French peoples hated war, but if war should come, they disposed of resources sufficient to gain victory. A little later, he wrote to one of his correspondents: "If we can really make Germany believe that we will fight, then we may at long last be able to do something to prevent an outbreak of war."

Eden's new orientation presented the question of allies with new force. Gradually, and with great reluctance, a number of British politicians, including Churchill and Eden, came to the conclusion that the sole ally in Europe for Britain, realistically speaking, was the Soviet Union. Now they had realised that there could be no alternative. Hence Eden's utterances, which indeed were less forceful than those of Churchill, in favour of concluding a mutual assistance pact with the USSR.

It was difficult to achieve the aim referred to by Eden—to make Germany believe that Britain and France seriously meant to fight for their position in Europe.

Time and again Hitler and Mussolini had had meetings with British and French leaders, and had brought away from these the firm impression that these people would not go to war against fascism. Hitler told his generals that Daladier and Chamberlain, whom he had seen in Munich, were too cowardly to attack.

While he recognised in principle that things might end in an armed clash between the two blocs, Eden did not expect that war with Germany was less than a month away. Parliament was prorogued for the summer, and Eden decided to spend some time with his old regiment. He was still young enough to be called up for active service in time of war. Besides, submitting himself to some military training would be good for his image in the constituency and in the public eye in general. He was gazetted as second-in-command of a battalion in what was then the one and only British armoured division. But even in this "military" setting he was full of civilian concerns: at the year's end there might be a General Election, and in letters to those in his Group

he asked them to give thought to how they might succeed in getting elected.

At the end of August it became clear that it was only a matter of days before Germany attacked Poland. Britain had not only given her "guarantees" to Poland, but had confirmed them by a formal treaty. Should those guarantees be fulfilled? Eden considered that Britain had to keep its word, and that if Germany attacked Poland war should be declared on Germany.

Certainly, failure to meet the treaty obligations to Poland would have meant that Britain and France had capitulated completely to Hitler, without a shadow of resistance. No country after that would have trusted Britain's word, and Britain's influence in Europe would be at an end. This was understood not only by Eden, Churchill and many Members of Parliament, but by the majority of British people.

On the morning of September 1, 1939, Germany moved its troops into Poland. The Second World War had begun. At this moment Chamberlain had two things to worry about: how to remain in power now that the terrible catastrophic consequences of his policy were plain to be seen, and how to react to the German attack upon Britain's ally.

The first problem was one to which he had already addressed himself in good time. He had two opponents whose authority and popularity were great enough to enable them to head a Parliamentary move to bring down the government: Churchill and Eden. Chamberlain considered Churchill to be potentially more dangerous than Eden. Events had shown that the position taken up by Churchill over the last few years had been correct, and this raised his authority and popularity in the country at large; furthermore, Churchill had had vast experience of political struggle, and owned a strong will. Eden's popularity was considerable, but he had not the impressive power of Churchill. The previous 18 months had convinced Chamberlain that Eden would not enter into direct conflict with him.

Chamberlain decided to ensure himself against a possible attack by Churchill first of all, and used the traditional method. On September 1, at midday, he summoned Churchill to Downing Street and invited him to join the War Cabinet, which was to be formed as war had begun. The conversation was conducted in terms indicating that the matter of the declaration of war was already decided. Churchill agreed, and began to talk of who else should be asked

to join the government. Eden's name was mentioned. Nothing was said as to what post would be his.

The majority of British people thought that Britain should at once declare war on Germany, but Chamberlain was unable to bring himself to do it. German planes were bombing Polish towns, Nazi tanks were thrusting deep into Polish territory, but the Prime Minister still hoped that he could somehow wriggle out of the promise made to Poland if some sort of agreement could be patched up with Hitler. Mussolini had offered to act as intermediary—there was a ray of hope. That was the reason why on September 1, at 9.30 a.m. the British Government sent Hitler, through the British Ambassador in Berlin, not an ultimatum, as it should have done (and as many later thought it had done), but a warning, calling on Germany to withdraw her troops from Poland; no date for the withdrawal was mentioned.

On September 2 Cadogan noted: "No answer from Germans. We are simply waiting." But the Members of the House of Commons, in this case truly representing the feelings of the people, did not propose to put up with the delay in declaring war. Many of them realised that there was a whiff of a new Munich in the air, and that this would mean utter disaster and dire disgrace for Britain. So when Chamberlain in the afternoon tried to justify the delay by referring to the hesitations of the French Government, this, according to Cadogan, "infuriated" the House. Harold Nicolson writes that after Chamberlain had spoken "the House gasped for one moment in astonishment. Was there to be another Munich after all?" Churchill was furious but concealed it—Chamberlain had bound him, having got his promise to join the War Cabinet, and he had to keep silence at this historic moment. And if war was not declared, there would be no War Cabinet, and Churchill would find himself still out in the cold. Eden was awaiting the call to come and join the government, and he too kept silence.

Many members of the government, as distinct from the Prime Minister, understood that the situation both in Parliament and in the country was dangerously explosive for all the "men of Munich", avowed or unavowed. The only thing that could defuse the situation was a declaration of war on Germany. In the evening of September 2 an unprecedented step was taken by five members of the government. They met in one of the rooms of the House of Commons and announced that they had gone on strike, saying

they did not propose to leave the room until war was declared. At 10 p.m. they were summoned to No. 410 Downing Street. At the long table in the room used for Cabinet meetings sat the members of the government. Chamberlain again began to explain the reason for the delay in declaring war on Germany by referring to the French Government's hesitation, but he made no proposals of his own. His words were met with stony silence, a silence which was most eloquent in conveying the Ministers' disapproval. He waited for some comments, but none came. Then Chamberlain sighed and said: "Right, gentlemen, this means war."

At the same time, Horace Wilson was in his office meeting Fritz Hesse, a German agent. Hesse had done business with Wilson before, at the time of the secret talks with Wohltat. Now he said he had come with a proposal from Berlin for another bilateral meeting between Britain and Germany; Hitler was eager to receive a distinguished British statesman and talk the whole thing over. The Nazis were attempting to restrain the British Government from a declaration of war. At the time too Wilson was ready to play in their hands. He assured the Nazi agent that an agreement could be reached, provided that Hitler gave orders for the withdrawal of his troops from Poland: "Then, we might be prepared to let bygones be bygones." There was a pause; he obviously thought that this was too much of a concession, and added: "Provided Herr Hitler apologizes too, of course." But Wilson had failed to take changing circumstances into account. The old forms of "appeasement" had had their day, and the policy of Munich was now entering its last phase.

At midnight there was another Cabinet meeting. It was agreed that at 9 a.m. on September 3 an ultimatum should be handed to the German Government, demanding the withdrawal of German troops from Poland. If no answer signifying compliance with this demand had been received by 11 a.m., Britain would consider itself at war with Germany. The ultimatum was delivered. There was no answer. Britain was at war. At 11.15 a.m. Chamberlain spoke on the radio, announcing the country was at war.

In the afternoon of the same day Eden was at last summoned to Downing Street. Chamberlain invited him to join the government as Secretary of State for Dominions, but without a seat in the War Cabinet. Eden agreed.

So on September 3, 1939, Britain entered the Second World War, and Eden again entered the government.

Chapter IV

THE WAR YEARS

The inclusion of Eden and Churchill in the government did not change the balance of forces within it. The tone was set, as before, by Chamberlain, supported by the consistent Munichites—Halifax, Hoare and Simon. The new members of the government had been transformed into defenders of Chamberlain. Churchill, brought into the Cabinet and becoming First Lord of the Admiralty, stood up with energy for "his" Premier and "his" government. Eden, always much less determined and active than Churchill, concentrated on his duties as Secretary of State for Dominions. "The Group", formerly his, was now headed by Leopold Amery. Eden, naturally, could not now take part in its meetings.

The first serious problem Eden faced in his new Ministry was the matter of the Dominions entering the war on the side of the mother country. Although the operation of centrifugal forces within the British Empire was already far advanced by this time, the community of economic, political and military interests between Britain and the Dominions was so strong that Australia and New Zealand entered the war on Britain's side almost automatically. The Australian Prime Minister Menzies, in declaring war, proclaimed: "There is unity in the Empire ranks—one King, one flag, one cause." They were followed, after slight hesitation but fairly quickly, by Canada and South Africa, though the latter only came into the war after a new government took office under Smuts—a long-standing partisan of close relations with Britain. Within a week the question of the Dominions entering the war was settled satisfactorily. Eden played his part in the formulation of these decisions, keeping in close touch with the Dominions' High Commissioners in London, who carried out, in essence, diplomatic functions.

In October there was an Imperial Conference in London,

at which representatives of Britain and the Dominions, of ministerial rank, discussed the coordination of the war effort. Eden played an active part in the conference, and after its conclusion he went with the Dominion representatives to France, where they visited French army dispositions and those of the British expeditionary corps which had just been sent over, and which occupied its own section of the front on the Franco-Belgian frontier.

In December the first Canadian army units arrived in Britain, and in February 1940 Australian and New Zealand units arrived in Egypt. On both occasions Eden organised ceremonial welcomes for the troops, with the object of demonstrating to the world the unity of the Empire. His other public pronouncements pursued the same aim. They had now acquired a quite new theme—imperialism.

Naturally, in Eden's concept British imperialism was God's gift to the unhappy peoples of the earth. "The British Empire," said Eden, "has shown itself, by its example of toleration and wise government, to be a civilizing and humanizing influence over the whole world. It has been an instrument for raising the standard of life among backward races. It has been a great spiritual force, creating better feeling and understanding between nations." It is hardly likely that Eden consciously had his tongue in his cheek when describing in such glowing terms a system responsible for the extreme oppression and exploitation of about half a billion colonial slaves for the benefit of the British ruling classes. He was a convinced imperialist by birth, by upbringing and education, by class affiliation.

At the end of September 1939 the Dominion representatives raised the question as to the need for the government to formulate its war aims. The people were to be told why they had to fight. Eden was happy to take this matter up, since it came within the foreign policy realm. At this stage they had clearly formulated in London only one war aim: Britain was fighting to bring down Hitler. Chamberlain asked: "What stands in the way of ... peace?" And answered his own question: "It is the German Government, and the German Government alone."

Eden tells us that in the course of negotiations between members of the government and the Dominions' High Commissioners, the following decision was worked out: "The first essential ... was to convince the world that we were fighting solely to free Europe from Hitler and the Nazi

regime and that we were not prolonging the war in our own material interests." Why was it necessary to persuade the nations that Britain was fighting not for its imperialist interests, but for lofty ideals? So that the people of Britain and the peoples of the British Empire would support the war against Germany.

During the last months of 1939 and in early 1940 the British Cabinet avoided formulating distinct war aims, confining themselves to the general statement given above. Eden explains why. "In October," he writes, "some senior members of the Government, believing that Hitler's mind might still be open to negotiation, considered a settlement with Germany more likely if the terms were not precisely defined. This was a lingering relic of past appeasement policies." This statement is further confirmation of the fact that the re-shuffled Chamberlain Government still clung, even after September 1, 1939, to the same policy that had already—one might think—totally failed and discredited itself.

It is interesting that Eden, remote as he was from a correct understanding of the class basis of Nazism, nevertheless made a true estimate of its purely German specificity, which was that Nazism sprang from the soil of German imperialism. "Hitler himself," he said in December 1939, "is not a phenomenon; he is a symptom; he is the Prussian spirit of military domination come up again." Eden did not, of course, approach Nazism as being a political trend expressing the interests of the most reactionary and aggressive forces within the imperialist bourgeoisie. But what Eden and his colleagues remembered very well was Nazism's militant anti-communism and anti-Sovietism; they remembered it and tried to utilise it in the interests of the ruling circles of Britain.

Eden understood that the Versailles experience was something which must, for Britain, be considered a failure. Meditating on new forms for the "organisation" of Europe which would ensure Britain's leading role in Continental affairs, he had by the end of 1939 already reached the idea of the essentiality of what we would now call the economic and political integration of Europe. "We cannot be content," he wrote to Halifax at this time, "with merely attempting to restore the world situation to what it was before war broke out, we must do better next time." The "better" was envisaged by Eden as "some form of European federation. This

would comprise a European defence scheme, a European customs union and common currency". After the cessation of hostilities Britain set about the practical realisation of these ideas.

British diplomats are always guided by the principle of not having all one's eggs in one basket. So although the Soviet Union had taken up a position of neutrality in the war that had now commenced, British political circles considered it essential to maintain continuous contact with the Soviet Embassy in London, despite their official policy of hostility to the USSR. The worse Britain's situation in the war became, the greater became its government's desire to find support in the assistance of the Soviet Union.

In the course of a fortnight Germany smashed bourgeois-landlord Poland. British ruling circles were taken aback by the speed of Hitler's victory; they had always had an exaggerated idea of Poland's military capabilities. World opinion was even more taken aback, seeing Britain fail to render any assistance whatever to the Poles in their unequal struggle, although under the terms of the guarantees given by Chamberlain and the treaty signed on August 25, 1939, Britain was bound to mobilise all its resources, including its armed forces. The whole world was able to see how much Chamberlain's word and signature were worth. It was now clear that it was dangerous to trust this government, for at any moment, under any pretext or even without one, it might refuse to honour its obligations under treaty, if it saw it as against its interest to discharge them.

This historical lesson should be borne in mind when reading the lamentations uttered by British politicians and historians over the distrust displayed by Moscow towards their British ally in the years 1944-1945. Leaving aside the failure to honour the promise to open a Second Front, leaving aside Churchill's readiness in 1945 to reverse the guns and join the Germans against the USSR, his ally—even without that the British failure to fulfil treaty obligations towards Poland would in itself have been enough to make any partner of Britain judge its government not by its words but by its deeds.

The American historian, Fleming, writes: "It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Poland was sacrificed as deliberately as Czechoslovakia was. Poland meant ... to the Munich men ... another diversion of German conquest-mania toward the East which would ... lead to a German-Soviet clash."

The policy of Munich was still being pursued under other conditions—those of armed conflict.

Those conditions of conflict were themselves phoney. Britain and France were at war with Germany, yet they mounted no attack upon Germany in the West to support Poland (although they had every opportunity to do so). They did not move even after Poland's defeat, confining themselves to dropping leaflets from the air and blockading Germany's trade. The Americans called it "the phoney war" or "the sit-down war".

The "phoneyness" on the military front was matched by that in home policy. Although the government had assumed emergency powers under which they could introduce any measures needed to put the life of the country on a war footing, those measures were not taken.

The Labour and Liberal Parties did not go so far as to enter a coalition government alongside the Conservatives (the latter were too heavily compromised), but they did conclude an "electoral truce", and promised to support the war effort. Which meant that the opposition parties were not only not trying to remove a government composed of discredited Munich men, they were giving it moral and political support.

The apparent absurdity of the "phoney war" masked some crafty plans. In London there was an opinion current that, having intimidated Germany by declaring war, and having let her annex Poland, it would be possible to get the fascists to reach an agreement with Britain at last. And the might of the Nazi military machine would then be turned, for sure, against the Soviet Union. One may think it improbable that such plans could be entertained in late 1939, but they did exist, and they dictated the main line of British strategy and British foreign policy during the first seven months of the Second World War.

A catalyst intended to hasten the development of events along these lines was found in the Finnish-Soviet war, which began in the autumn of 1939. To begin with, the British Cabinet did all it could to hinder a peaceful solution to the conflict being reached through negotiations. And when military action had commenced, Britain and France tried to make the war as prolonged as possible by furnishing Finland with up-to-date arms. David Dilks, the historian who edited Alexander Cadogan's *Diaries*, formulates his conclusion, after studying the British diplomatic documents,

as follows: "British policy was to damage Russian interests without fighting her; by supporting the Finns to prolong the war."

In the final phase of the war Britain and France were ready to move troops to Finland, to fight alongside the Finns against the USSR. And what about the war against Germany? The ex-President of Czechoslovakia, Eduard Beneš, who was close to British and French ruling circles, had written that in the winter of 1939-1940 the latter were ready to involve their countries in a war against the USSR, after first reaching an agreement with Germany.

These calculations were confounded by peace being concluded on March 12, 1940 between the USSR and Finland. On March 16 Cadogan noted: at the Cabinet meeting "everyone very gloomy—particularly, of course, Winston. I suppose we have suffered a reverse over Finland." He is not giving the wrong name by accident—Churchill was indeed fiercely anxious to "switch" the war to become a war against the USSR, not against Germany. As for Eden, neither the documents of the period, nor his own Memoirs written later, offer the slightest hint that he, as a member of the government, disagreed with this treacherous policy.

The Finnish scenario has fallen to the ground, and London and Paris turn hastily to constructing plans for a strike against the Transcaucasus, using mainly air and sea forces. It would have meant war with the USSR. On March 28 these plans were discussed in the Supreme War Council—the joint Anglo-French body for war controlling. Not, of course, without the presence of the ubiquitous Cadogan, who noted in his diary: "Supreme War Council at 10... 'Study' Baku."

While these hazardous plans were being concocted, Germany was making her preparations, and early in April 1940 executed her attack upon Denmark and Norway. Denmark capitulated without resistance, but the Norwegian people rose to fight fascism. Britain and France attempted to prevent Norway being taken over, naval and air forces were brought into play, and troops landed at a number of points in Norway. The Allied forces suffered a rapid and crushing defeat in this operation. Events were demonstrating the dangerous adventurism of London's policy.

The point was not so much the failure of a particular line in foreign policy as the fact that that failure had entailed a marked worsening of Britain's strategic position. Germany

had outflanked her, and had occupied important positions from which to strike against the British Isles and break, or make extremely difficult, Britain's lines of communication with America across the Atlantic. So when a two-day Parliamentary debate on the Norwegian operation opened on May 7, the Conservative benches in the House of Commons showed strong dissatisfaction with the Cabinet's actions. There were energetic calls for its resignation. Leopold Amery quoted Cromwell's words to the Long Parliament: "You have sat too long here... Depart, I say, and let us have done with you. In the name of God, go!" Amery was a leading Conservative Back-Bencher, and his speaking in this way was very significant. The Labour group raised the question of confidence in the government. Churchill, displaying his loyalty to the Conservative Party, produced a lively defence of Chamberlain. Eden kept silence.

The voting showed that the majority in favour of the government, which had formerly stood at 250, had now shrunk to 81. Thirty-three Conservative members voted against the government, and 165 abstained, refusing to support Chamberlain. Immediately after the vote was announced the Labour leaders informed their Conservative opposite numbers that the Labour Party would join a coalition government only if it did not include Chamberlain, Simon and Hoare. A group of about 60 Conservative MPs met under the leadership of Leopold Amery and Robert Boothby and enunciated a demand for the formation of a government which would represent all parties. "The Prime Minister, whoever he might be, should choose his colleagues on merit, and not on the recommendation of any party manager," they declared. A naive statement to come from experienced politicians! Apropos of all these doings Cadogan remarks: "The trade of politics is indeed a dirty one... But all their beastly little envies and jealousies and susceptibilities have to be 'appeased'."

The Conservative leaders were obliged to start talks on changing the composition of the government. Chamberlain stubbornly insisted that his post should go to Halifax, and that Churchill should not have it. In the very midst of the to-ing and fro-ing, on May 10, Germany began an advance on the Western front, against Holland, Belgium and France. "Most critical days. And here we are Cabinet-making!" notes Cadogan.

Chamberlain cheered up when the German advance began—he thought that under such circumstances no one would dare replace him. But he was wrong. The emergency situation meant it was necessary to form a government including Labour and Liberals, and they stated their preference for Churchill. That was decisive.

On May 11, 1940, Churchill formed his first Cabinet. Instead of being Dominions Secretary Eden became Secretary of State for War, but still had not a Cabinet seat. There were three Labour leaders—Attlee, Bevin and Morrison—in the Cabinet, and a Liberal, Sinclair, became Secretary of State for Air. Chamberlain and Halifax remained members of the Cabinet. Simon also got a ministerial post.

The men of Munich still had the majority of the government posts. Churchill handled them with care and consideration. This was because, in the first place, they had the Party machine in their hands, and the new Prime Minister could not do without their support. And in the second place, Churchill's differences with the Munich men were only over the line to be taken in foreign policy, in everything else their solidarity was complete.

And what of Leopold Amery, who had headed the opposition to Chamberlain in Parliament? He was offered a second-rank Ministry, the India Office. He had had ambitions of getting the War Office, but had to take what he was given. In doing so he very likely consoled himself with the thought that those in the front rank do not always, by a long way, reap the fruits of the victory which their efforts have brought about. The same thought must have visited Duff Cooper, who in October 1938 had resigned from the Chamberlain Government in protest against the Munich Agreement—he now got the not very vital post of Minister of Information.

Of the leading Munichites only Samuel Hoare was thrown overboard. At the insistence of the Labour leaders, Churchill left him out of the government and appointed him Ambassador to Spain. "S. Hoare now to go to Madrid! I suppose they want him safely out of the country!" writes Cadogan.

At the front things moved fast. There were few illusions in London as to the possibilities of France putting up any great resistance. And if France fell, a direct attack upon Britain was to be expected. Eden, in his new capacity as Secretary of State for War, set about the hasty organisation of Local Defence Volunteers, later to be known as the Home

Guard. Churchill went repeatedly to Paris (leaving Chamberlain as deputy in his absence) to meet his French colleagues, trying to infuse some confidence into them and to prolong France's resistance.

It was obvious that Mussolini was awaiting the outcome of the battle for France and would enter the war on the side of the victor. The Churchill Government made a desperate attempt to buy him over. On May 24 the Cabinet commissioned Halifax, who had remained Foreign Secretary, to inform the Italian Government that if Italy remained neutral, Britain would ensure that she participated in the future Peace Conference on the same terms as the victors.

But in Rome, and in other places too, they considered that after France it would be the turn of Britain, and that she would be crushed. So Halifax's approaches had no effect, and Italy entered the war on the side of Germany. As Broad remarks: "It was the final commentary on the policy of appeasement." Britain now had another front to cope with in the Mediterranean, in the Middle East and in North Africa. Her strategic situation was thus made significantly worse.

The Churchill Government tried to keep France fighting, and at the same time took measures to pull its own expeditionary corps out of France. They succeeded in saving their men, but all their arms, including hand weapons, were left on the beaches of Dunkirk. In default of a victory, the evacuation was hailed as an immense success, and echoes of this are still to be heard in memoirs and historical literature.

On June 22, 1940, France signed the capitulation terms. Britain had not a single ally left on the European continent. The German divisions had reached the shores of the English Channel, with the white cliffs of Dover visible in good weather. The invasion of the British Isles by the enemy hosts became a very real threat.

At this dark hour the British people displayed notable calm, determination and readiness to make any sacrifice rather than permit the fascists to take over their country. That settled the stance Churchill would take up, and made it possible for him to declare that Britain would not surrender but continue the fight. The government set about taking energetic measures in preparation for meeting the threatened invasion. Churchill was a good orator, and his speeches of this period were a ringing call to the people to carry on the struggle.

As for Eden, Broad describes a broadcast speech of his thus: "It was devoid of heroics. He used commonplace, casual phrases. He spoke not as a leader in war spurring a gallant people to die in defence of their land and their liberties, but rather as the chairman of a company inviting his shareholders to take part in an enterprise slightly out of the ordinary line of business."

But the War Minister's deeds were more impressive than his words. He organised the rapid re-armament of the divisions evacuated from France (the weapons were assembled from old stores, or, for the most part, bought from the USA), also the enrolment and training of new units, the construction of defence works, and the further recruitment and training of the Home Guard.

Supreme political control over all matters to do with the war was held in the hands of Churchill, since he was not only Prime Minister but also Minister of Defence. This meant that the Secretaries for War (Eden), Air (the Liberal Sinclair) and the Admiralty (Alexander, a Labour man) were all in effect Churchill's assistants, each with his own department. This arrangement entirely suited Churchill, who wished to have all the strings in his own hands and to make his own decisions on major matters, especially those affecting military or foreign policy.

The government's course of war against Germany and Italy meant that Britain's economy and industry had to be put on a war footing. Emergency legislation was stepped up. Government measures were made much easier to execute by the fact that the British people was prepared to work for defence without thought of self.

The fact that for Britain the war from an imperialist was becoming a just, anti-fascist war played a great part in the mobilisation of the country's resources for military requirements. True, there was a negative factor also in operation: the desire of the monopolies to make war profits above all, and the lack of desire on the part of pro-Nazi elements in entrepreneurial circles to help the war effort against Germany.

It would be a profound error to think that this change of the war for Britain from an imperialist to a just war meant that the government of Britain abandoned its imperialist war aims. Even at the most difficult moments in the course of the war those aims still played a most important part. There is no part of the globe where British policy and strategy in

the war years was not dictated by imperialist considerations, be it Europe, the Mediterranean, Africa, Asia, the Pacific, or the Atlantic.

In the summer of 1940 a ministerial committee on problems of the war in the Middle East, which sat under Eden's chairmanship, decided that reinforcements, to the tune of two tank battalions, should be sent from Britain to the Middle East. At a time when the home country was under threat of invasion, it was a risky business to thus weaken its not very considerable military strength. In London they were prepared to take that risk, because in the Middle East Britain's colonial positions were being threatened by Italy.

In the autumn, when Egypt was under threat from the advance of the Italians from Libya, Eden arrived in the Middle East with a special mission (in his absence the War Office was supervised by Churchill). Together with the generals commanding the British forces in the area he discussed defence plans, supplies and reinforcements, and studied also the possibilities for opening a Balkan front against Germany and Italy. Such an initiative would have brought the Balkan countries into the ranks of Britain's active allies, particularly Greece, Turkey and Yugoslavia. Such a front would have been like a shield protecting British positions in the eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East. But it was clear that any such undertaking could hope for even a measure of success only if supported by troops sent from Britain, preferably in strength, to Greece. And the available troops were not numerous, and needed for the defence of Egypt.

Early in November 1940 Eden returned to London from his quite prolonged tour. Good news awaited him.

British public opinion was not favourably impressed by the post of Foreign Secretary continuing to be occupied by an outright Munich man, Halifax. The policy he had espoused had been a failure, and its consequences catastrophic for Britain. War with Germany and Italy called for a new line, and that could not be implemented by a discredited "appeaser", even if he did have the support of powerful reactionary forces. It was clear that the main task of British foreign policy in the immediate future must be to gain support for Britain, in whatever form, from the USA and the USSR. Halifax was clearly going to be of no use in establishing better relations with Moscow.

In December the British Ambassador to the United States

—also a fully attested Munichite, Lord Lothian—died, and Churchill decided to make Halifax his successor. When he proposed this to Halifax himself, the latter attempted to decline the offer politely. His lady wife was furious, and went in person to speak to Churchill about it. The Premier treated Dorothy Halifax with great consideration, but remained firm, and made it clear that she and her husband would have to go to Washington.

Halifax was obliged to give in. But though he left to take up an ambassadorial post, he remained a member of the War Cabinet, and attended its meetings when he visited London. An unprecedented arrangement indeed! And the point of it was not only that Churchill wished to sugar the pill and to make a conciliatory gesture in the direction of the circles that backed Halifax—it was also meant as an indication that from now on Britain attributed especial importance to its relations with the USA.

The question of Halifax's successor answered itself. Eden's appointment as Foreign Secretary would be taken by the mass of the people as a move in the right direction by the government, since Eden's erstwhile departure from the Chamberlain Government redeemed his participation in the policy of "appeasement"; in the public view he appeared to be an opponent of that policy.

Eden's personal relationship with Churchill also played no small part in his appointment. They had no differences of conviction or political conceptions. Eden's period out of office had brought the two together. The elder statesman liked the younger man's industry, efficiency and skill in calm diplomatic negotiation. The Prime Minister was even more favourably impressed by the other's invariable courtesy and the fact that he did not try to push himself to the centre of the stage. Eden knew his own ability and did not conceal his admiration of his chief's energy, will-power and dynamism.

In the war years, and after, Churchill treated Eden with paternal condescension, as Baldwin used to do.

On one occasion Churchill, in an access of emotion (he was sometimes prone to this), said to Eden: "We shall work this war together." And, went on the Premier, since he was already an old man (23 years older than Eden) he would not make Lloyd George's mistake of carrying on after the war. Eden must be his successor. As we now know, Churchill was not given the opportunity of repeating Lloyd George's mis-

take, inasmuch as the electorate swept his party from office, yet he did not retire from active political life for 15 years after that. But in October 1940 no one knew that, and Churchill's assurances were balm to the soul of his interlocutor.

When Eden had replaced Halifax and become a member of the War Cabinet, his status in the government was raised, but his independence and freedom of action was not much increased. The Foreign Secretary was often only the Premier's adviser on foreign affairs.

On the whole that is in accord with the true relation of roles as between the Foreign Secretary and the Prime Minister. Churchill himself in his war memoirs certainly contributed, probably unconsciously, to the creation of an impression that Eden played a very subordinate part under his premiership. In fact it is all rather more complex. Not long ago the English journalist and historian, Elisabeth Barker, in her book *Churchill and Eden at War* (published in 1978), has made a detailed study of state archives and of private papers the basis of a reassessment—in our view a well-founded reassessment—of the relationship between the two statesmen, in favour of Eden.

Eden could not always, invariably, say "Yes" to Churchill's ideas on British foreign policy. In the first place, the Foreign Office and its leading figures had their own position on all these questions, one that was substantiated, calm and carefully considered. And in many instances this position did not coincide with Churchill's impulsive thoughts. The Foreign Office stood out firmly for its own viewpoint against Churchill, and it did so through Eden. Eden could not help but take account of the views of his own Ministry, the more so since he saw them as well founded and in accord with his own feelings and convictions. E. Barker writes that "Cadogan had no hesitation in standing up to Churchill or urging Eden to do so. Eden knew that if he gave way too easily to Churchill he might lose his own department's respect, which he valued very highly... Eden was the protagonist of the ideas and policies of his department." And secondly, for the sake of maintaining his own prestige in the eyes of the Foreign Office and his Cabinet colleagues Eden simply had to say "No" to Churchill when he considered it absolutely necessary to do so.

Of course Eden picked the best possible times and circumstances for raising his objections, taking his chief's mood into account too. He would make the objections in the polit-

est possible terms, often conventionally formal ones. And the aggressive, obstinate Prime Minister frequently had to take the arguments advanced by Eden into account. It was after all clear to everyone that he, Eden, had the Foreign Office behind him.

L. Woodward, the official historian of British foreign policy in the Second World War, writes: "Mr. Eden was thus able to balance, and often to correct Mr. Churchill's rapid approach and equally rapid conclusions." In Woodward's view, Eden was "a realist, and at the same time inclined by temperament to think in terms of distant consequences and ultimate considerations".

"In wartime," wrote Eden himself, "diplomacy is strategy's twin." Certainly the part which foreign policy is called upon to play in time of war is very considerable. It helps to increase the forces available to a country by gaining it allies and ensuring the necessary relations with these. But the success of a foreign policy is dependent, not upon the skill of diplomats (though that too is a factor which cannot be ignored), but upon the economic, political and military strength which backs it up. Arthur Balfour, British Foreign Secretary during the First World War, wrote in his time: "While diplomatic failures may hamper the army, military failures make the Foreign Office helpless." And that was the position in which British foreign policy found itself in the period between the French capitulation and the Soviet Union's entry into the war.

Back in March 1940 Cadogan had to note the difficulties being experienced by Britain in its relations with the Scandinavian countries. Later he was to say to Eden: "Diplomacy is rather hamstrung by being deprived of the necessary apparatus—military strength. Words don't do anything."

It was fully realised in London that Britain alone, even with the resources of the entire British Empire to back it, could not avoid crushing defeat in a war with Germany and Italy, and in the impending conflict with Japan. Consequently there was only one way out: to find what had been foolishly thrown away on the eve of war—allies. Of the countries not belonging to the hostile camp only two possessed real might—the USA and the USSR. So it was towards these that the attention of British diplomats was then turned.

The need for strong allies grew greater after the failure of the British attempt to create a Balkan front. By this time the Italian attack on Greece from Albania had been halted

by the Greek forces, but it became known that soon Hitler would come to the aid of Mussolini. Both fascist leaders were striving to gain a firm footing in the Balkans. Hitler needed this not only for the sake of utilising the rich resources of the Balkan countries (food supplies, and oil), but in order to open up the road to the Middle East for himself. And besides that, aggression in the Balkans was to ensure that the right flank of the German front would be covered in the forthcoming attack on the USSR.

It was in early January 1941 that the Committee of Imperial Defence (a British governmental body) took the decision on forming a Balkan front. It was essential to ensure, firstly, the political side of this decision, i.e. the organisation of a bloc or alliance of Balkan countries under the aegis of Britain, and secondly, the military solution of the problem—the sending of British troops to Greece. With this object Anthony Eden and the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, General John Dill, were sent to the Middle East in February on an urgent mission.

They met with great difficulty in making their way there by air. Bad weather delayed them first at Gibraltar, then at Malta. Eden whiled away the dragging hours by reading *War and Peace*. When at last they landed in Cairo, they learned straight away, on the airfield, that General Wavell had already begun to allocate the troops for Greece.

Eden plunged into a whirl of diplomatic activity, but with limited success. The Greeks, already fighting the Italians and expecting a German invasion, agreed at once to accept British troops, and the generals quickly concerted the operational details. But the Turkish Government would not respond to London's appeals, and announced that it would enter the war only if Turkey were attacked. The Yugoslav leaders manoeuvred, hoping to reach an agreement with Germany. At that time few believed that Britain would hold out—hence the difficulty of the Eden-Dill Mission.

On March 7 the first British troops reached Greece, and a month later Germany launched an attack on Yugoslavia and Greece. The British were forced to evacuate their forces—it was another, smaller, Dunkirk.

Britain's position was again worsened. The failure of the Balkan plans was compounded by a revolt of pro-German elements in Iraq, where they seized power temporarily, and by the success of the German and Italian advance against Egypt. It was now more important than ever for Britain

to assure herself of help from the USA and the USSR.

At the beginning of June 1941, writes David Dilks, "British diplomacy could do comparatively little until reinforced by the accession of allies". Cadogan put the point with more force: "Fact is that with our military weakness and the sensational ineptitude of our commanders, diplomacy is completely hamstrung."

The British Government was already pressing the United States for Allied support. At that time, as the English historian Wheeler-Bennett notes, Britain was confronted by the task of the "substitution of the United States of America for France as Britain's chief ally". It was a more or less realistic object to pursue, but it required time, and there was less and less of that available.

The ruling circles of the USA did not want Britain to suffer defeat in the war, for if it did Germany would become a much more considerable rival to the US itself than was the British Empire that was becoming decrepit. But for many reasons, primarily to do with internal politics, the government in Washington was unable in 1940 and early 1941 to enter the war formally on the side of Britain. But it provided Britain aid in arms and strategic raw materials.

The Churchill Government accepted that aid thankfully, and buttered up the Americans diligently. When a new American Ambassador to Britain, Winant, arrived early in 1941, King George VI met him at the station. British diplomatic protocol knew no such precedent.

In Downing Street they were aware that the Roosevelt Government did not want to come into the war against Germany and Italy and that even if it did so, it would be thinking mainly of the Far East, where the fascist powers' ally, Japan, was active and must inevitably clash with America. So only material aid could be looked for from the USA in Europe and the Middle East; the prospect of American divisions appearing there seemed remote.

But Britain needed an ally capable of withstanding the numerous German crack divisions. Only the Soviet Union could be such an ally—there was no one else in Europe. Only a little time ago the British Government had refused the Soviet offer of alliance, and had even tried to attack the USSR along with Finland. After that, it was hard to suppose that one could rapidly normalise relations with the USSR, when these had been brought to such a pitch by the actions of the British side.

The difficulties attending improvement of Anglo-Soviet relations were heightened by the fact that in British ruling circles the need for their improvement was sharply contested. But the course of events quickly strengthened the hand of those who favoured joint action with the USSR.

In May 1940 (after the German seizure of Denmark and Norway, and their successes in France) the British Government took some steps in the direction of normalising relations with Moscow. The Labour leader, Stafford Cripps, was sent to Moscow to try and conclude far-reaching economic and political agreements with the Soviet Government. The ultimate aim of all these efforts was to bring the USSR into the war against Germany.

Early in 1941 the British Government received information suggesting that Hitler might attack the Soviet Union. This roused fresh hopes that the German threat to the British Isles might be reduced. And this time there was no desire (as there had been early in 1940) to join with Germany in an anti-Soviet crusade. What troubled the minds of British politicians now was the fear that the USSR might make major concessions to Germany and so prevent war breaking out between them.

On May 31 a very significant note appears in Cadogan's diary regarding a consultation he attended between Eden and the Chiefs of Staff (of the army, air force and navy): "Chiefs of Staff have come to conclusion that Germany is prepared to attack Russia. I agree, but I believe that Russia will give way and sign on the dotted line. I wish she shouldn't, and I should love to see Germany expending her strength there. But they're not such fools." In these lines one senses how profoundly worried the leaders of Britain's Government were.

They did not sit there and do nothing. Churchill, Eden, Cadogan—they all warned the Soviet Government repeatedly that Germany would very soon attack the USSR. Eden and Cadogan spoke of it to the Soviet Ambassador in London, and Churchill wrote to J. V. Stalin. These warnings, of course, were meant to give Moscow the chance to prepare, so that there would be no chance of a last-minute capitulation to Hitler. The warnings were couched in such a way as to give the Soviet leaders to understand that, if war came, Britain would not be hostile to the USSR. They were meant as an earnest of the British Government's good intent towards the Soviet Government, as a transparent hint regard-

ing readiness to cooperate, and as a psychological step nearer to an alliance in the future.

At the same time, though, there can be no doubt that these apparently friendly advances towards the USSR were intended to contribute to the outbreak of war between the Soviet Union and Germany. The British Government not only egged on the Soviet Government to tear up its non-aggression pact with Germany and take action against her, they were at the same time egging on Hitler to attack the USSR. In the spring of 1941 British intelligence contrived to let the German Embassy in Washington have a report stating that the USSR allegedly intended to undertake military action.

The warnings from London were no news for the Soviet Government. It had received similar information from other sources. But the persistent warnings from the British could not help but rouse suspicions regarding their motives. And that put in doubt the facts conveyed. In a telegram to London on April 5 Cripps expressed his certainty that the Soviet Government were aware of the facts which the Prime Minister wished to tell them, and that Moscow might interpret British actions "as an attempt by us to make trouble between Russia and Germany".

The Soviet leaders knew very well that war between Germany and the USSR was something that British ruling circles had always wanted, and that at that juncture it was practically Britain's only hope of salvation. Under such circumstances it was difficult to believe in London's "goodwill". Churchill himself realised this. The Prime Minister commented to Sir Cripps' telegram: "They [the Soviet Government] know perfectly well their danger and also that we need their aid."

So when on June 22, 1941, Germany perfidiously attacked the Soviet Union, Churchill did not need to call a Cabinet meeting or summon the House of Commons to give its opinion on what line to take. The decision on that had been taken long ago. As early as June 10, Eden had told the Soviet Ambassador in London that "in the event of a Russo-German war, we should do everything in our power to attack by air German-occupied territory in the west". Three days later, after consulting with the Prime Minister, Eden again met the Ambassador and told him that "if the Germans attacked the U.S.S.R., we should be willing to send a mission to Russia representing the three fighting services... We

should also give urgent consideration to Russian economic needs."

On June 22, which was a Sunday, Churchill was as usual at Chequers. Since the preceding Friday he had been in a highly excited state, a mood which communicated itself to the others present—Eden, Cripps, Winant, and the Minister of Supply Lord Beaverbrook, who was an intimate of Churchill's. When news came that Germany had attacked the USSR, the tension was released. The Prime Minister said that he would speak over the radio that evening, and retired to prepare his speech.

In his broadcast speech Churchill declared that in this war Britain would be on the side of the USSR, and explained why: if Germany succeeded in vanquishing the Soviet Union, Hitler will "bring back the main strength of his army and air force from the East and hurl it upon this Island. His invasion of Russia is no more than a prelude to an attempted invasion of the British Isles... The Russian danger is therefore our danger and the danger of the United States." The British Government had no other rational choice. It was faced with a dilemma: either to ally itself with the USSR, or to face a terrible defeat in the war with Germany and Italy.

The necessity for cooperation with the USSR compelled Churchill to overcome for the time being his hatred of the Soviet state, but not to give it up. The Prime Minister saw fit to remark at this time that he would seek alliance with the devil himself if it were necessary. This moral and psychological attitude could not but leave its mark upon the relations between Britain and the USSR, as allies, in the succeeding course of the Second World War.

In preparing his speech Churchill did not call upon Eden's help. In fact he sent him off to London to see the Soviet Ambassador and inform him of the British Government's position. The speech was not shown in advance to Cadogan either. Churchill was concerned lest they might try to make him tone down the speech. The toning down, of course, would have affected not those passages in which he spoke of communism, but the actual statement that Britain would support the Soviet Union. Eden never liked categorical statements.

It was Eden who had the job of making Britain's new ally known to the House of Commons. His Parliamentary speech followed the lines of Churchill's broadcast, but was much

calmer and less categorical. On Anglo-Soviet relations, Eden recalled the text of the communique issued after his visit to Moscow in 1935. That had stated that there was no conflict of interest between the two governments on the most important issues of international relations. This statement, said Eden, merely reflected the true state of affairs. Then, echoing Churchill, he said: "The political systems of our two countries are antipathetic, our ways of life are widely divergent, but this cannot and must not for a moment obscure the realities of the political issue which confronts us to-day. This country has probably fewer Communists than any nation in Europe. We have always hated the creed, but that is not the issue. Russia has been invaded, wantonly, treacherously, without warning. The Russians to-day are fighting for their soil. They are fighting the man who seeks to dominate the world. This is also our sole task."

In Eden's speech (as in Churchill's) one finds the thesis that Hitler's invasion of the USSR is only a prelude to his attacking Britain and the British Empire. This shows that both speakers were fully confident of a German victory over the USSR. As history has shown, they were incapable of making a true estimate of their ally's strength and of foreseeing the actual course of later events in the Second World War. Churchill and Eden were not alone in this by any means. Their scepticism was founded on the reports made by British Intelligence and the estimates produced by British military headquarters.

This conviction that the USSR must inevitably be defeated dictated a definite line of conduct towards their Soviet ally. From now on the British Government saw it as their most important task to prolong Soviet resistance to the German military machine for as long as possible. The weaker that machine became on Soviet territory, the less would be the subsequent threat to Britain.

In the United States of America the question of establishing allied relations with the USSR was being solved with greater difficulty. US ruling circles had the same class hatred for the country of socialism as their British colleagues. But they had not lived through a Dunkirk of their own, and many in the United States felt themselves to be safer than the British, not realising the potential threat to them contained in possible further successes by Nazi Germany. Only people of progressive views, especially Communists, plus some realistically inclined politicians, declared themselves

immediately in favour of supporting the Soviet Union. "Under these circumstances," the Soviet historian L. V. Pozdeyeva notes, "Roosevelt's personal intervention was of immense importance. Roosevelt's adherence to principle, and his realism, his correct understanding of the state and national interests of the USA, which he was able to place above his class prejudices and antipathy to communism—these qualities were once again shown at the outbreak of war between Germany and the Soviet Union." At a press conference held on June 23, Roosevelt declared that the government of the United States would give all possible aid to Russia in its struggle against Germany.

The British people heartily welcomed the news that their country had become the ally of the Soviet Union in the fight against the common foe. It placed great hopes on this alliance.

The Soviet people and its army suffered heavy losses, but fought on with ever-increasing stubbornness. Something was taking place in the USSR quite unlike the course of the war in Western Europe. The value of the Soviet ally grew rapidly in the eyes of the London Government, and the sympathy of the British people for the USSR grew even more rapidly.

One might have thought that in Downing Street they must inevitably reach the conclusion that it was vital to give the USSR maximum possible assistance, so that it could fight against Germany and her allies as effective as possible. And it was only natural that the Soviet Government should address repeated requests to the British Government in this connection.

Churchill's speech of June 22, 1941, contained generous promises, but the precise meaning of them was anything but clear. The Prime Minister had declared that "we shall give whatever help we can to Russia", and that "we have offered the Government of Soviet Russia any technical or economic assistance which is in our power". The same vagueness remained even after the signing on July 12 of an agreement providing for joint action by the governments of the USSR and of Britain in the war against Germany.

The Soviet Union had every right to expect not only assistance from Britain in the war against the common enemy, but also that its interests would be taken into account in the post-war peace settlement. The problems of the peace settlement to be reached after the war were being discussed by

the British Government with its ally, not yet involved in the war—the United States of America.

At the beginning of August 1941 there was a meeting between Churchill and Roosevelt at Argentia in Newfoundland. The two heads of government discussed a number of questions concerning the course of the war, and adopted the Atlantic Charter, in which the war aims of the two countries were formulated. Those aims, that is, which could be publicly mentioned, and which would stimulate the war effort of the peoples. Churchill said that the Charter was "an interim and partial statement of war aims designed to assure all countries of our righteous purpose, and not the complete structure which we should build after victory". At the conference the ultimate objectives were also discussed. They envisaged the establishment after the war of Anglo-American world domination. Therefore it was contemplated that other countries should be disarmed, while Britain and the USA remain armed. Those two countries were to make the post-war settlement. The USA and Britain were also preparing to define the place of the USSR in the post-war world in their own way.

The Soviet Government was insisting that Britain should undertake military operations in Western Europe in order to draw a number of German divisions away from the Soviet front; it also raised the issue of aid in the form of arms and raw materials. In London these requests were fobbed off with references to the impossibility of meeting Soviet wishes ... and troops were sent to the Middle East. The correspondence between Stalin and Churchill shows that the Soviet Government did not hide its dissatisfaction with this state of things.

Even Stafford Cripps, in the USSR and observing the heroic efforts of the Soviet people, was disgusted by the British Government's cavalier attitude to the discharge of its allied obligations. Cripps believed, Eden writes, that "we in London had paid little attention to Stalin's remarks and telegraphed that he could see no use in staying any longer in Russia."

In London they decided to soothe the Soviet Government by diplomatic means, but not to meet its just demands. This ticklish mission was entrusted to Eden. Recalling those days, he later wrote: "Politically, Britain's relations with her allies were now my chief concern until the end of the war."

In November Churchill recurred, this time in more specif-

ic terms, to the idea of Eden being his preferred successor. In the presence of Brendan Bracken, the Minister of Information, and two other Conservative Party representatives, Churchill said that if anything should happen to him, the reins of government would be assumed by Eden. Gradually people were being accustomed to the idea that Eden was the official heir apparent to the Prime Minister.

The Foreign Secretary spent November and the beginning of December preparing for his trip to Moscow. He had long conversations with Churchill and the Chiefs of Staff as to what he might promise the Soviet Government. At one time they were going to promise a number of air squadrons for the southern sector of the front, then they thought better of it; they agreed to additional deliveries of tanks and aircraft, then that fell off as well. Eden writes: "I talked over the military part of my mission to Moscow with the Prime Minister and the Chiefs of Staff. It was bleak."

Ultimately the Cabinet approved a memorandum which Eden was to deliver to Stalin, "to exorcise certain suspicions from Stalin's mind". Among these was the idea "that we wished to exclude Russia from an Anglo-American scheme for a post-war settlement, that in making peace we should ignore Russian interests", etc. In fine, this was a list of the disloyal intentions which Britain actually was nourishing towards the USSR. Eden was to exorcise these "suspicions" by proposing to sign, while in Moscow, "a joint declaration proclaiming our mutual agreement to collaborate not only in making the peace settlement but in maintaining it". Besides this, he was to discuss questions of post-war reconstruction with the Soviet Government, and a number of other issues.

The declaration as drawn up by Eden contained no concrete obligations. It sought to conceal the absence of British aid to the Soviet Union beneath smoothly turned, vague diplomatic phrases. Even Cadogan was critical of the scheme. He referred to the draft Anglo-Russian declaration, in his diary, as being "as thin as restaurant coffee".

The date of departure approached, and on December 4 Cadogan wrote: "Discussed Russian trip. Appears now that we shall not even have material to offer to Russians in place of divisions. A. (Eden) rightly made a stink about this, but agreed to go."

Eden's party left London on December 7. The Foreign Secretary was accompanied by the inevitable Cadogan, by

Eden's Private Secretary, Oliver Harvy, and Frank Roberts, a Foreign Office official from the department handling relations with the Soviet Union.

In those war years it was not easy to travel from London to Moscow. Eden went by the Northern Sea Route. First by train to Scotland, and then by cruiser to Murmansk. The group arrived on the morning of December 8 at the naval base of Invergordon, and there Eden learned from Churchill (who rang him from London) that the Japanese had attacked the American naval base at Pearl Harbour in the Pacific. This meant America's entry into the war. "I could not conceal my relief," says Eden, recalling this telephone conversation. Churchill told him that he would himself be going to the USA to discuss appropriate measures with Roosevelt.

On December 12 the cruiser *Kent* delivered the party at Murmansk. At that time it was a front-line town, living a tough and fighting life. The authorities there offered Eden the choice of leaving by air, which was chancy owing to the bad weather, or going on by train. Under wartime conditions, the train journey would take about 60 hours. Eden chose the train. Perhaps he was influenced by what he was told by General Nye, one of those accompanying the group, that there was a secret rule in the Air Ministry which laid down that when anyone from their staff had to be at a certain place at a certain time, he must travel by train.

In Moscow Eden was accommodated in the Hotel Nationale. This hotel found favour, for Eden and Cadogan felt it much resembled the Beau Rivage in Geneva, where the British delegation had always stayed when attending the League of Nations. The English party looked at Moscow, which that December was itself a front-line city; they visited the Department Store "Mostorg" noting with interest the sale of decorations for New Year fir-trees, and were surprised to see that at such a moment there was a brisk trade in books. Then Eden and Cadogan asked to be taken to Poklonnaya (Obeisance) Hill, where in 1812 Napoleon had waited in vain to receive the keys of Moscow. Both were disappointed to find that fog prevented them seeing the view of Moscow from the hilltop.

The talks the Soviet leaders had with Eden were difficult ones. The British draft declaration (sometimes referred to as an agreement) failed to deceive the eye of the Soviet side. Instead of the "thin coffee" offered it, the Soviet Government proposed that a concrete treaty be signed of alliance

and mutual military aid between the Soviet Union and Britain in the war against Germany. It was further proposed that there should be a second treaty, providing for "mutual understanding between the Soviet Union and Great Britain regarding the settlement of post-war problems". Eden was by no means prepared to conduct concrete talks on such themes, still less to sign definite obligations.

The sharpest disagreements arose over the question of the Soviet Union's frontiers. Eden was asked whether Britain guaranteed that during the post-war peace settlement it would support the USSR's demand for the recognition of its frontiers as existing on June 22, 1941. The talks showed that the question had been raised rightly and timely. Eden replied that he was not able to promise such a thing.

To Halifax in Washington he telegraphed thus: "I used the Atlantic Charter as an argument against him [Stalin]." These are significant words. They mean no less than the fact that Churchill and Roosevelt had formulated the Charter in such a way as to be directed not only against the enemies of the anti-Hitler coalition, but in some measure, against the USSR as well. At any rate that was how Eden interpreted it. In this connection Stalin declared to Eden: "I thought that the Atlantic Charter was directed against those people who were trying to establish world dominion. It now looks as if the Charter was directed against the USSR." Eden tried to wriggle out of it, but he was asked in round terms: "Why does the restoration of our frontiers conflict with the Atlantic Charter?" Eden was obliged to reply: "I never said that it did." Which was clearly untrue, and this is confirmed by, among other things, the above-quoted telegram to Halifax.

On this same subject, Stalin told Eden: "All we ask for is to restore our country to its former frontiers. We must have these for our security and safety... I want to emphasize the point that if you decline to do this, it looks as if you were creating a possibility for the dismemberment of the Soviet Union. I am surprised and amazed at Mr. Churchill's Government taking up this position. It is practically the same as that of the Chamberlain Government." Eden pleaded that without agreement with the United States Government and those of the Dominions, he could not meet the wishes of the USSR. This too was an excuse. The British Government could, if it wished to, and did settle such matters independently.

Having got into difficulties in his talks with the Soviet leaders, Eden decided to resort to cunning. On the way back to the hotel he agreed with Cadogan and the other members of the delegation that when they came to see him in his room they would use strong words about their reactions to the Soviet stand, and threaten to break the talks off. The point was that they considered it a foregone conclusion that their rooms would be bugged, so that any indignation they expressed there would be passed on to the right quarter. According to Cadogan, they all willingly agreed to take part in this bit of theatre, and went about it *élan*. But as neither Cadogan nor Eden ever says a word more about the results of the exercise, one can only think that it failed of its effect.

Eden's talks in Moscow did not yield the results the British had hoped for. Rather the contrary. And at the same time the Soviet leaders had now been made aware of the position of the Churchill Government on a number of important issues. As for the objective results of the talks, they were on the whole a useful step along the hard road of assembling an anti-Hitler coalition, although they did not produce the results the Soviet Government had hoped for. "Recognizing failure," Cadogan wrote on December 20, "we had brought short draft [to lay before the Soviet side—V.T.] of usual colourless communiqué. On arrival, found Russians had a much better one, which we at once accepted."

The position of the Soviet Union, defined in the course of the talks with Eden in December 1941, was consistently adhered to throughout the war. David Dilks has this to say on the subject: "What is remarkable is that even at this stage, after six months of desperate crisis and with the German armies at the gates of Moscow, the Russians should have formulated their policy so precisely and pressed it so confidently."

On the day when Eden left Moscow, Churchill arrived in Washington to consult with Roosevelt. The talks were entirely successful, and the Prime Minister was very pleased with them. The important point for Britain was that the USA agreed to consider Germany as Enemy No. 1, and Japan as Enemy No. 2. This meant that the European theatre of war would take priority.

On January 8, 1942, Churchill sent the following telegram to Eden regarding his talks in Moscow: "No one can foresee how the balance of power will lie or where the winning armies will stand at the end of the war. It seems probable however that the United States and the British Empire, far

from being exhausted, will be the most powerful armed and economic bloc the world has ever seen, and that the Soviet Union will need our aid for reconstruction far more than we shall need theirs." A truly comprehensive formulation! It embodies, still, the idea that Britain and the USA together will arrange the post-war peace, and the calculation that the USSR will be totally enfeebled, to the advantage of British and American imperialism. And since such an enfeeblement would be advantageous, then it should be induced by all available means. This strategic calculation is present in British policy throughout all the war years.

The end of 1941 and the start of 1942 were marked by one of the most important events of the Second World War. The battle for Moscow ended in a crushing defeat for the attacking German armies, and the Red Army went over to the offensive. Britain and the USA, on the other hand, suffered heavy defeats in the Pacific and in Asia, in their battles with the Japanese. The loss of Singapore, a major military and naval base, was seen by Churchill as not only a great disaster, but a disgrace to British arms. The first nine months of 1942 were considered by Cadogan to be "the hardest time" for British foreign policy, "on account of the sense of impotence bred by successive military setbacks and consequent diplomatic weakness".

The wreck of their calculations on defeat in war for the USSR, plus the British and the United States disasters in the Pacific, evoked very disturbing thoughts about the future, in London. Circumstances compelled the British Government to review its basic concepts. The Soviet-German front was the main theatre of the Second World War, and this radically altered the views of the British Cabinet on the role of the USSR in the war and, in consequence, in the post-war world. What if those calculations, that the USSR would be totally enfeebled in the fight with fascism, were to be proved wrong, and the USSR should end the war with triumphant victories? In Moscow Eden had found not only complete confidence that Germany would be utterly defeated, but readiness by the USSR to play its part in the future in the war in the Far East. In case events should take such a turn measures must be taken, and fast.

Eden returned from Moscow convinced that the Soviet Union was fully determined to carry on the fight. As soon as January 1942, therefore, he prepared a memorandum for the Cabinet in which he detailed changes affecting British

policy towards the USSR. "On the assumption that Germany is defeated," wrote Eden, "and German military strength is destroyed and that France remains, for a long time at least, a weak power, there will be no counterweight to Russia in Europe... Russia's position on the European continent will be unassailable. Russian prestige will be so great that the establishment of Communist Governments in the majority of European countries will be greatly facilitated."

This prospect, distant as it was at the time, was Eden's and his colleagues' nightmare throughout the war years. Reviewing the Soviet Government's position regarding the frontiers of the USSR, Eden wrote: "If Hitler were overthrown, Russian forces would end the war much deeper in Europe than they began it in 1941. It therefore seemed prudent to bind the Soviet Government to agreements as early as possible." The memorandum noted that the United States Government did not, at this stage, share this conviction, but "became more tolerant of Soviet demands as Russian military victories developed". Eden knew that the Soviet Government had its suspicions, and well-founded suspicions they were, that Britain and the USA were planning to establish their own world domination after the war. He therefore proposed that they should "abstain from any action which would intensify the Soviet Government's already existing suspicion that we look forward to an Anglo-American peace in which Russian interests would be thwarted or ignored". Since in the event of the USSR being victorious in the war the Soviet Government would not agree to its frontiers being other than they had been in 1941, Eden considered it reasonable to agree to the demand for recognition of the 1941 frontiers, and to confirm this by treaty.

This memorandum of Eden's is a most important document. It laid down British policy towards the USSR for many years to come. The underlying basis of that policy was the desire to keep the USSR away, by all possible means, from taking part in the settlement of European affairs, that is to deprive it of the fruits of victory in the war. The memorandum at the same time demonstrates the full unity of views concerning the USSR between Eden and Churchill.

In May 1942 the USSR People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, V. M. Molotov, arrived in London, and on May 26 together with Eden he signed an Anglo-Soviet Treaty of Alliance in the War Against Hitler Germany and Her As-

sociates in Europe and of Collaboration and Mutual Assistance Thereafter. The question of frontiers did not figure in the text of the treaty. Eden's intention of "binding the USSR" on this issue had not been realised. At that time some people in the Foreign Office thought that it would be easy to settle the matter of frontiers later. The Soviet Government, interested in strengthening a united front of governments and peoples to ensure victory over fascism, had decided at that time not to insist upon its just demands concerning the frontiers, so as not to hold up the signing of the treaty with Britain, which was an important contribution to the formation of the anti-Hitler coalition. It was clear to the Soviet leaders that the frontier question would be settled according to the balance of power prevailing at the end of the war. When victory at last put this question back on the agenda, Eden—according to David Dilks—"opposed Russia's demands more vigorously than Churchill".

V. M. Molotov went on from London to the USA for talks with the American Government. It was clear that the subject of these would be the opening of a second front, i.e. an Allied invasion of the European continent, in order to relieve the position of the USSR on the Soviet-German front and bring the war to an end more quickly. The British Government stubbornly avoided such an undertaking, directing its resources instead to the Middle East, where Italy and Germany were threatening British colonial interests.

Now Roosevelt had invited Soviet representatives to Washington. "I was disturbed at these American projects," Eden was to recall later. He admits that at that time he was against a second front. His diary shows an entry for April 10, 1942: "Saw Winston after luncheon. We spoke of American plan. He feared General Staff would say 'Yes' and make this a pretext for doing less elsewhere."

There are two important points here. Firstly, Eden is disturbed by Molotov's visit to Washington. There were reasons for this. During the war years Britain persistently tried to establish herself as a kind of intermediary in Soviet-American relations. Churchill and Eden always objected if there was any question of direct Soviet-American contact, while at the same time trying to keep the Soviet Government at a distance in their own, British, talks with the Americans, even in cases when the interests of the USSR were directly involved in the talks.

Secondly, the diary entry shows clearly that British mili-

tary leaders might have agreed to the opening of a second front in 1942. It was, incidentally, admitted to be a possibility at staff talks in London in early April of that year. This in itself blows skyhigh the arguments advanced by Churchill, Eden and others, that for Britain and the USA to open a second front in 1942 was a physical impossibility.

Eden was right to be worried over the Soviet representatives' visit to the USA. V. M. Molotov came back to London from Washington with a Soviet-American communique which spoke of the opening of a second front in Europe in the course of 1942. The British Government associated itself with this agreement in the conscious knowledge that it did not intend to implement it.

Britain and the USA had the necessary conditions for the opening of a second front in 1942. Firstly, the German army suffered heavy losses in its battles with the Red Army, and all its main forces were diverted to the Soviet front. Secondly, the Allies had the material resources for an invasion at their disposal, witness the opinions of both American and British military leaders. And thirdly, the British people was pressing insistently for the second front to be opened, and this operation above all others would have been assured of universal popular support.

None the less, London came to an agreement with Washington that no second front would be opened in 1942, and an Anglo-American landing in North Africa would be made instead.

But how would the Soviet Government react, having been promised a second front in June? Churchill went to Moscow himself to make the explanations. In his first talk with Stalin, Churchill informed him that in 1942 the Allies would make a landing in North Africa, but that a large-scale invasion of the European continent would be launched by Anglo-American forces in 1943. In response to that J. V. Stalin told him, as Churchill said to those in his party, that London and Washington had not kept their promise on the second front.!

Churchill was furious. He told his companions: "I have come round Europe in the midst of my troubles ... hoping to meet the hand of comradeship: and I am bitterly disappointed. I have not met that hand." What an occasion! The Prime Minister had his very self come to Moscow, to explain everything to "those Russians", and they, instead of falling into raptures over the dishonest behaviour of the British, had

dared to tell him that a government should discharge obligations it had taken upon itself.

Churchill put on a great act to his companions, threatening to leave Moscow without even saying goodbye to the Soviet leaders. The others persuaded him not to do this—for if he quarrelled with the Soviet Government, it would mean more sacrifice for Britain in the war. Furthermore, they considered there was no cause for resentment, since, as Cadogan noted, they had at least not heard “a hint from Stalin that if the Western Allies could not do more, he did not know how much longer Russia could stand the strain. On the contrary.” Churchill’s rage came from the consciousness of being seen through.

In breaking their promise of opening a second front, the ruling circles of Britain and the USA struck a heavy blow at the anti-Hitler coalition. Any other government, finding itself in the position of the Soviet Government in the summer of 1942, would have decided to find a way out through a separate peace with the enemy (and Churchill seriously feared this). But the Soviet people and its leaders were filled with determination to bring the war to a victorious end. It was essential not only to remove the danger threatening the Soviet Union from outside, but to free the peoples of Europe from fascism by smashing Nazi Germany and her allies. As Dilks stresses, after the Moscow talks “Churchill ... felt quite sure that the Russians would fight on to victory. Indeed, Stalin had spoken of his forthcoming counterstroke” (this referred to what later evolved into the rout of the Germans at Stalingrad). The firmness and realism of the Soviet Government in its dealings with its allies, and the will for victory of the Soviet people, helped to keep the anti-Hitler coalition together and so made significantly easier the struggle to vanquish fascism.

Wartime alliances do not always withstand the deception of one ally by another. And with regard to the second front there was conscious, calculated deception. Now, when the relevant documents have been made public, no conscientious historian doubts this. The American Trumbull Higgins, for instance, writes that Churchill had “deliberately deceived his Russian ally”, and had done it more than once. In August 1942 the British Premier assured the Soviet Government that the second front would certainly be opened in the coming year. History was to show that this too was deception.

The question arises—why so much perfidy with an ally which was making colossal sacrifices to save not only itself, but Britain too? The answer can be found in Anthony Eden's memorandum of January 1942, to which reference has already been made, and in Churchill's memorandum of October 1942.

The Moscow talks left the British Government with mixed feelings. They were relieved and happy to have gained the conviction that the Soviet Union would continue to fight. But fear and alarm were the feelings roused in London by the prospect of the USSR not only surviving the struggle, but gaining victory over Germany. "By 1943," as the *Labour Monthly* was to write, "panic seized the Western rulers at the prospect of the fall of fascism and the victory of communism." This assessment is based on the Churchill memorandum of October 1942, in which he wrote: "My thoughts rest primarily in Europe, the parent continent of the modern nations and of civilisation. It would be a measureless disaster if Russian barbarism overlaid the culture and independence of the ancient states of Europe. Hard as it is to say now, I trust that the European family may act unitedly as one under a Council of Europe." Further the memorandum stated that the council was to consist of ten European countries, including Germany and Italy, and act against the Soviet Union.

This is a document of great historical importance. In it we see repeated (only in a sharper and more vicious form) the same ideas which were contained in Eden's memorandum. Both documents formulated the programme for British foreign policy for the period of the war and for many years thereafter. The struggle to put that programme into effect provided the main content of the entire subsequent political lives of both Churchill and Eden.

Two further points concerning the Churchill memorandum spring to the eye, even if they are less significant ones. He began to draw it up immediately after his return from Moscow, and this shows how much "sincerity" there had been in his words about coming to the Soviet capital with friendship in his heart. Further, the memorandum was drawn up at the height of the Battle of Stalingrad, which is indicative of the feelings which the British Prime Minister really had for the Soviet people. Fortunately for us and unfortunately for the British Government, the Soviet leaders had a perfectly clear understanding of the true attitude of Downing Street to

the USSR, something which British bourgeois historians are not prepared to forgive the Soviet Government.

1943 was the year in which the Red Army, in the historic Battle of Stalingrad, turned the tide of the Great Patriotic War, and hence of the Second World War as a whole. It was a hard year for the USSR, but even then the British Government did not open the second front, thus breaking its pledged word yet again. Arms deliveries from Britain were not in great quantity, and irregular, failing to arrive just when they were most needed, at difficult moments on the Soviet-German front.

When at last, in 1944, there was an Allied landing in Europe, those organising it were concerned not so much with giving aid to the Soviet Union as with limiting the advance of the latter's armed forces into Central and Western Europe. They were not altogether successful in this, which prompted the British Government to take a step fraught with treachery and betrayal: in the spring of 1945 it was seriously planning to line up with those German divisions that were still unbroke, and take action along with them against their own ally, which had at the cost of incredible effort gained victory for itself and for Britain, as well as for other peoples. It is monstrous, unbelievable, but it is a fact, and a fact admitted by the leaders of the British Government themselves. We know of it from Churchill's own words.

Anglo-American relations also were far from cloudless during the war, although to outward view there was nothing untoward—Churchill and Roosevelt met frequently and corresponded regularly. Britain's alliance with the USA, although not confirmed by treaty, was much firmer, and reached much wider and deeper, than that with the USSR. Yet none the less in their relations inter-imperialist contradictions were becoming more intense and deep.

The British Government did its best to shift the burden of war on to the shoulders of its American ally, and to dictate strategy and tactics which would further British interests. But this became progressively more difficult to do. As the war developed it quickly became apparent that Britain's contribution was less than that of the US, let alone that of the USSR. The American Government used its preponderance in power to "crowd" Britain to no uncertain extent, seizing upon many positions formerly British—in its colonies, its foreign trade, its strategic dispositions and spheres of foreign policy.

After Stalingrad, both London and Washington faced up to the coming problems of the post-war organisation of peace; a victorious end to the war was no longer in doubt. Owing, maybe, to differences in their characters, or maybe to the fact that for the USA the dangers of war were practically less than for Britain, Roosevelt at this time devoted more thought to such matters than did Churchill. The British Premier gave most of his attention, so far, to military operations. Britain was obliged to employ its forces and resources, which were not vast, in theatres of war scattered all over the globe. Many important issues of foreign policy Churchill settled himself to the great but well-concealed annoyance of Eden, leaving the Foreign Secretary to deal with those matters which concerned the future peace settlement; but as victory came nearer he began to obtrude himself more and more into that sphere too.

As we are told by the historian Woodward, who has made a thorough study of Foreign Office war-year documents, the British Government and the Foreign Office began to think and plan for the post-war peace as soon as they were relieved of the necessity of occupying themselves with what might be termed "the diplomacy of survival". By the end of 1942 already Eden had prepared and presented to the Cabinet a number of proposals on the post-war peace settlement. It was to be his task to map out ways of finding agreed positions with the USA and the USSR. And that was a matter of supreme difficulty.

As Woodward rightly states, the three leading protagonists of the anti-Hitler coalition had a common political aim—to win victory over the enemy, but "victory" was anything but a clear-cut concept. It meant one thing to the United States, another to Britain, and yet another to Russia. The USSR was pursuing democratic, progressive aims, and intended to see them realised as fully as possible in the post-war peace. The United States and Britain had imperialist aims in mind, which arose from their social system, but the USA, for example, meant to realise them at the expense of Britain largely.

British diplomacy was in a difficult position. The leading lights of the Foreign Office realised perfectly well that the fruits of the approaching victory would be allocated according to the respective strengths of the victors, and the balance of power was changing day by day, to Britain's disadvantage. In the 20th century it is possible to compensate for

lack of might by diplomatic art only to a limited extent. Eden and the other exponents of British foreign policy made the most of what advantages they had, but time and the march of events was against them.

They had to hurry to obtain in advance agreements dealing with the future which would favour Britain. In February 1943 the British Prime Minister suggested to the President of the United States that Eden should go to Washington to discuss post-war problems with his American colleagues. Roosevelt agreed, and in March Eden arrived in the USA.

The President talked a lot with his guest from London in the course of his 18-day visit, showing a preference for discussing the future of the world in an informal setting—at dinner or tea. Also present on these occasions were Harry Hopkins, the President's confidential aide, and Secretary of State Cordell Hull, who had a highly suspicious attitude to all the doings of the British Government.

Eden's biographers are fond of quoting a telegram which Roosevelt sent to Churchill, in which the President informed him that he had spent three evenings with Eden, that Anthony was "a grand fellow", and that they had reached agreement on 95 per cent of the issues discussed. It is hardly surprising that Roosevelt should have been favourably impressed by Eden's quiet, pleasant manners and his wide knowledge of international relations. But so far as their full mutual understanding was concerned, the remarks were politeness only.

The documents give evidence of serious differences between the positions of the American President and the British Foreign Secretary. Roosevelt was developing an idea of his that the post-war world should be guided by four Powers—the USA, Britain, the USSR and China. Eden objected. Better to do without China, since it was not a Great Power (and in Eden's mind no doubt the main point here was that China, in view of its dependence upon the USA, would follow the lead of the US rather than of Britain). What the visitor said left his hosts with the impression that London would cling obstinately to its Far Eastern possessions. When Roosevelt remarked that it would be a great gesture if Britain offered to give up its colony in Hongkong, Eden's customary reserve deserted him. He replied that he had heard nothing so far to indicate that the United States intended to make any such gestures at the expense of its interests.

As regards the Soviet Union, Eden generously shared his

anti-Soviet thoughts with Roosevelt. It would be difficult to deal with the USSR in the future, he said. In consequence, it would be rash to rely upon the USSR taking a constructive part in the Big Four that was to govern the world, i.e. after victory the fates of all humanity were to be ruled by Britain and the USA.

Both sides had decided that Eden's visit must be exploited as a demonstration of Anglo-American union and cooperation. The visitor met prominent Americans: ex-President Hoover, Presidential candidate Wendell Wilkie, Mayor of New York La Guardia. In the capital of the state of Maryland, where Robert Eden had been Governor in colonial times, a ceremonial meeting was held at which Eden made a speech about his "American ancestors", i.e. the English colonial administrators who had once ruled the British colonies in North America. From ancient history he passed on to contemporary times and the scene in London, where British and American soldiers walked arm in arm, and said that upon their friendship depended the future of humanity. Still the same idea, of the Anglo-American duumvirate ruling the world. Those present stormily expressed their friendly feelings for Eden, and the House of Representatives of Maryland passed a resolution of greetings to the brave British ally of the United States.

Eden's reception had been demonstratively warm, but he came back from the USA with the conviction that the American Government meant to see Britain deprived of its colonial positions, and to get removed the preferential tariffs which protected the British Empire from an influx of goods from third countries.

The nearer the end of the war came, the sharper became the contradictions between the Western allies. In February 1944 Churchill sent Eden a letter in which he listed the formidable questions on which difficulty might arise with the USA: oil, dollar balances, shipping, policy to France, Italy, Spain, the Balkans, etc. An impressive list of the clash of interests between two imperialist powers drawn up by a competent person.

But the contradictions between the participants in the anti-Hitler coalition were pushed into the background by the pressure of the main task—to ensure victory over Germany, Italy, Japan and their allies. It was this which provided the subject-matter for numerous meetings of the Big Three, which foreign ministers attended as well as heads of govern-

ment, and for similar meetings of foreign ministers only.

The British side was insistent, and their instances were largely successful, that these Big Three meetings should be preceded by bilateral meetings at which British and US representatives worked out agreed decisions on the questions to be discussed. This meant that in the final stage they acted on a preconcerted plan and used their united efforts in an attempt to force the outcome they wanted upon the USSR. It was one more way of bringing pressure to bear upon the Soviet Government.

Making the best use, in British interests, of their position as ally of both the USA and the USSR was probably the main, though certainly not the only, task occupying Eden's department. The war had assumed global proportions, and there were British interests in all quarters of the globe. Eden had to exert enormous strength and power of self-control in his relations with General de Gaulle, who headed The Fighting France and was unwilling to admit any collaboration with Britain which might damage French interests. The war in the Pacific and in Asia, though primarily the concern of America, posed many problems for the Foreign Office too. London was the site of many emigre governments from countries temporarily seized by Germany. The Foreign Office cultivated them tenderly, hoping that after victory they would provide the nucleus for the reactionary regimes which the Foreign Office wanted to see restored in their respective countries. The situation in Latin America was changing rapidly, and a sharp eye had to be kept on things in order to ensure that British interests should not suffer too much.

There were many matters to cope with, they all grew progressively more complicated and harder to solve. As the war efforts of the USSR and the USA developed, the influence of Britain in the anti-Hitler coalition grew less and less, although the advance of this process was masked by the loud and demonstrative activity displayed by London.

Eden was obliged to travel a great deal. The imperfections of aircraft in those days, weather conditions which were often bad, long roundabout routes (since the war had closed the direct ones)—all this meant a heavy physical strain on Eden, whose health had never been strong. There were moments of danger, too, during these numerous journeys.

Once Churchill and Eden were returning to England via North Africa and Gibraltar. German intelligence knew of it, and set up a watch on Lisbon airport. As a rule the Germans

did not touch planes flying between Lisbon and London. But this time their agents observed a stout, stooping man with an enormous cigar joining one plane. As soon as it took off it was promptly shot down. All 13 passengers perished, including one man who bore a close physical resemblance to Churchill. It was this resemblance which had distracted the attention of the German agents from the plane in which Churchill and Eden returned safely to London.

In London, Eden actually lived during the war years in the Foreign Office building. In the very early days of the war Churchill had developed a passion for working at nights, and he insisted that a flat should be fitted up for Halifax at the Foreign Office because he wanted his Foreign Secretary always available. Now it was Anthony Eden who lived in the four-roomed flat on the top floor. His office had many telephones with direct lines to the Prime Minister and the Chiefs of Staff (with anti-bugging devices fitted). Beatrice did her best to improve the appearance of the "official issue" flat with pictures and flowers.

True, the Edens did not spend much time together as a family. The Foreign Secretary was often on his travels, and his wife, a tirelessly energetic woman, had plunged wholeheartedly into charitable work for the armed forces. She organised a mobile canteen and travelled with it to different army camps, mainly in the south of England. Beatrice was a brave woman and put up with the trials of wartime stoutly and cheerfully, and with unfailing humour. But her relations with Anthony showed a more and more distinguishable coolness.

From time to time they would get a weekend free, and spend it in a small country house, Binderton, near Chichester. The study there was furnished with antiques. The walls were covered in bookshelves full of beautifully bound volumes, among them a collection of books on Persia. They included some outstandingly fine works presented to him by the fabulously rich Aga Khan. Among the pictures (and Eden was very fond of paintings and collected them whenever he could) were a dozen or so watercolours painted by his father, and one landscape of his own, done near the French town of Arles.

In the master of Binderton it was hard to recognise the carefully groomed, elegantly dressed Foreign Secretary. Here Eden was transformed. The minute he reached his country home he changed into wide flannel trousers and a well-worn

sports jacket. In this attire he gardened, went for walks and received guests. All his life Eden loved gardening: he was considered something of an expert.

The Edens liked having people to stay. Their guests would usually be a small party only. From time to time Cranborne and his wife would come down—he and Eden were linked by many years of friendship and working together (they had both resigned at the same time in 1938), and by community of views. Eden's former P. P. S., Thomas, would also come to stay. And one always welcome guest was Ernest Bevin, the Labour Cabinet Minister, for whom Eden had the most profound admiration. It is hard to see what there could be in common between these two, so different in origins, upbringing, education, social standing, occupation and behaviour. True, they both had passionate feelings of love for and pride in Britain's imperial majesty, and equally passionate hatred of all that threatened that majesty and power.

The US Ambassador, John Winant, came to Binderton quite often. The impression of personal friendship and respect between the two was sedulously fostered. It would be wrong to exclude the possibility that these did exist, but it is beyond doubt that they hardly provided the main motive for these visits. The principal factor here was the interest of state affairs, political considerations.

Binderton did not give Eden a refuge from his work. He had his official telephone, on which even secret and confidential matters might be discussed; messengers arrived regularly to hand over despatch boxes of official documents.

From time to time the Edens would make their appearance at major social functions. "They looked such a happy couple," writes Bardens, referring to late 1944. "But in fact they were drifting apart, and had been doing so for a long time. Their tastes had never been very similar, and now their war work demanding the bulk of their time, left them less and less time together." This is scarcely an exhaustive explanation of what was happening in the Eden family. And an outside person can hardly say with certainty what does happen in such cases. But the fact remains that as soon as France was liberated, Beatrice to all intents and purposes moved to Paris. She took charge of a canteen for British army personnel that was set up in the Grand Hotel.

At the very end of the war Eden suffered a double bereavement. His elder son Simon, a R. A. F. pilot, crashed in Burma when his plane hit the side of a mountain. In June

Lord Moran wrote in his diary: "The P. M. asked me to dine with him and the Edens. He warned me that Anthony had just had a telegram to say that his boy, who was missing, had been found dead by the wreckage of his plane. During dinner nothing was said of this. They talked until nearly midnight as if nothing had happened. I wondered if I could have behaved with the same quiet dignity immediately after hearing that my John had been killed."

And in June 1945 Eden's mother, Sybil, died. This was a great loss for him—Lady Eden had always been proud of her son and had had great faith in his fortunate star.

That star was still in the ascendant. Churchill favoured him, considering him as his closest associate and helper. When Eden fell ill in the spring of 1944, Churchill had told him: "You are my right arm; we must take care of you." The historians say that they enjoyed a remarkable relationship of mutual trust and admiration, despite the difference in their ages. Churchill bears witness to their unity of views on many questions.

In June 1942, before Churchill left for one of his visits to the USA, he sent King George VI a letter saying: "In the case of my death on this journey I am about to undertake, I avail myself of Your Majesty's gracious permission to advise you that you should entrust the formation of a new Government to Mr. Anthony Eden, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, who is in my mind the outstanding Minister in the largest political party in the House of Commons and in the National Government over which I have the honour to preside, and who, I am sure, will be found capable of conducting Your Majesty's affairs with the resolution, experience and capacity which these grievous times require."

This is something without precedent in English history. Thus it was stated officially that Eden should be Churchill's heir and successor as Prime Minister and leader of the Conservative Party. There can be no doubt that this "testament" of Churchill's demonstrated his profound faith in Eden and affection for him.

Churchill's favour was of course very pleasing to Eden. But he had a hard time of it with the old man, who had a despotic character and a brusque lack of ceremony in his manners. Eden found particularly painful his constant interference in diplomatic matters. Churchill would from time to time send highly important telegrams to Roosevelt and Stalin without so much as a by your leave to the Foreign

Secretary and Foreign Office. It happened particularly often in his correspondence with the US President. At times when Eden was away, the Prime Minister was officially in charge of his department, and this made it easier for him to intervene in current diplomatic activity. Lord Moran, who was Churchill's personal physician and knew a great deal about what went on within the government in the war years and after, says that the Foreign Secretary "hated Winston's habit of taking over his job". In December 1944 Eden said to Moran: "I do wish he'd let me do my own job."

The Foreign Secretary was devoting his main attention, as previously, to the problems of the post-war settlement. British politicians saw the future world order of peace, to use Broad's expression, as "one village street from Edinburgh to Chungking". Now Britain was supporting the idea of a system of blocs, presented to the Allies and to world public opinion as a means of ensuring the peace, but which would in reality serve to shield Britain in the struggle against the USSR and the USA. Britain must "be prepared to assume the burdens of leadership".

The Foreign Office was looking at the possibilities of creating two confederations: one in Central Europe and the other in South-Eastern Europe, covering the states lying between Germany and Italy on the one side and Russia and Turkey on the other. By and large this was an old idea, with two aspects: a) the creation of a *cordon sanitaire* around the USSR, which would block it by a chain of countries hostile to it from the Baltic to the Black Sea, a *cordon* led by Britain; and b) the securing of Britain's leading role in Europe.

The plans cherished by Churchill and Eden envisaged keeping both the USSR and the USA out of European affairs. Britain intended to use every means at her disposal to defend her Empire and her external economic positions from encroachments by the United States of America. In Washington they were well aware of this mood.

London also made it quite clear where it stood on the question of post-war Germany. To begin with, the British and United States Governments were in favour of dismembering Germany. But before long they changed their position.

As victory came nearer, the British leaders placed more and more hopes on the Germany of the future. Field-Marshal Alanbrooke, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, noted in his diary on July 27, 1944: "An hour with Secretary of State discussing post-war policy in Europe. Should Ger-

many be dismembered or gradually converted to an ally to meet the Russian threat?... Foster Germany, gradually build her up and bring her into a Federation of Western Europe."

This was the policy favoured by Eden, Churchill and the entire Cabinet. It entirely suited the British ruling circles. But the working masses had other wishes. The majority of the British people felt a deep gratitude to the Russians for their heroic struggle against Hitler, and did not want a severance of the war-time alliance after victory. This was why the British Government was careful to keep its plans secret from the people.

On April 12, 1945, Franklin Roosevelt died, and Harry Truman became President of the United States; he was a man who did not agree with Roosevelt, and was hostile to the Soviet Union. Eden was delighted with the new President, with whom he had a long conversation on the "Russian danger", when he stopped off in Washington on his way to the San Francisco Conference of 1945.

It was at this conference that the United Nations Organisation was established. The British concept of regional blocs and alliances, formed under the aegis of Britain, ran counter to the idea of founding an international organisation for maintaining peace in which the leading members of the anti-Hitler coalition would participate on a basis of equality. Since the Crimea Conference of 1945, when Churchill and Eden had to concede to the principle of unanimity of the permanent members of the Security Council in the United Nations-to-be (which made it harder to use the organisation against the USSR), their interest in the creation of such an organisation had fallen off sharply.

Eden, who headed the British delegation at the San Francisco Conference, used the Australian Minister of External Affairs, Herbert Evatt, as a mouthpiece in an attempt to get the unanimity principle of the permanent members of the Security Council watered down, but without success. The Charter of the United Nations was eventually agreed and signed. The British Government had to agree to the establishment of the United Nations, but it continued, as before, to work for dominance of the Anglo-American bloc in the post-war world.

The Soviet Union had proposed including in the United Nations Charter the principle that independence must be the ultimate aim for the peoples of colonies. But the resistance put up by imperialist countries led to a compromise for-

mulation being adopted. The members of the British delegation (primarily Eden and Cranborne) fought especially hard to prevent the inclusion in the Charter of statements which would stimulate the liberation struggle of the colonial peoples.

Eden's attitude to any revolutionary liberation processes was negative. But he, belonging to a younger generation than Churchill, had shown some sympathy—short-lived and inconsistent—for the searchings of the “young Conservatives” who displayed interest in a planned economy as a means of overcoming the economic chaos of the capitalist system and who talked of reforms which might to some extent calm the seething working-class Britain. Between the mid-thirties, the period of the “young Conservatives” greatest activity, and the mid-forties, the interest shown in economic and social problems by Eden, Macmillan and other “young men” had to a large extent evaporated. They were, though, very alarmed by the possibility of socialist revolution developing in the aftermath of the Second World War. They recalled very clearly the revolutionary consequences of the First World War, and therefore, from time to time, Eden played up to the British workers. Besides his own apprehensions, a factor here was the frequent mention that had been made by President Roosevelt of the social “freedoms” which were to be ensured after the war.

Addressing a meeting of miners in Merthyr Tydfil, Eden assured his hearers that there would be no return to the past pre-war situation, he spoke as though it had not been his party, and not the government of which he had been a member, that bore the responsibility for the grim state of affairs for working people. Echoing Roosevelt, Eden asserted: “Social security must be the first object of our policy after the war, and social security will be our policy abroad no less than at home. The free nations of America, the Dominions and ourselves ... have the will and the intention to evolve a post-war order.” A very typical Eden formulation, capable of the most different interpretations! The British workers were to understand that “social security” meant the creation for them of socially just conditions of life. Eden meant them to understand him in that sense, but he himself clearly did not intend to pursue that aim. And the reference to “social security” as a principle of foreign policy pursued the same aim for working people in other lands, and was made with the same degree of sincerity.

Throughout the entire course of the war the British Government structured its policy and strategy in such a way as to ensure the preservation in Europe of pre-war reactionary regimes, and under no circumstances to permit of their being replaced by more progressive ones. But this was difficult, and in some cases impossible. Revolutionary forces in the countries liberated from the fascist yoke grew greater and stronger, and nothing but direct military counter-revolution could prevent them taking power into their own hands.

Neither Churchill nor Eden had the slightest hesitation in using British divisions to disarm their own recent allies—those who had taken part in the Resistance movement against the fascist forces of occupation, a movement which had gathered together under its banners all the most progressive and patriotic elements in the countries of Europe. It happened in Belgium. It happened in Greece. And when the Greek people resisted the attempt to foist upon them a reactionary, hopelessly discredited pro-British government, armed intervention was used against them. In December 1944, at Christmas time, Churchill and Eden went to Athens, to take the lead on the spot in organising the suppression of the Greek people's aspirations to freedom.

This counter-revolutionary violence and betrayal of the Greek Resistance fighters—who were Britain's allies—produced an outburst of indignation in world public opinion and within Britain herself. This had its reflection in Parliament. Eden rushed to defend government policy with all the fire of which he was capable. He told an indignant British public and a worried House of Commons that, as far as events in Greece were concerned, "I have had some experience in my life of international affairs and I have never known an issue where I have been more absolutely certain we are right... That is my absolute conviction." As history was to show, the "rightness" of the British Government was to mean, for the people of Greece, many years of intervention and bloody civil war.

By the end of 1944, as the Canadian historian G. Kolko notes, Britain and the USA intervened in the internal affairs of all the major countries of Western Europe in order to restrain the left forces. They were able to do this in France, in Belgium, in Italy, in Greece—in all the places reached by their troops. But they were powerless to exert their counter-revolutionary influence on the development of

those European countries which had been liberated by Soviet troops.

In Churchill's Memoirs and in Eden's, and in the books of English and non-English bourgeois historians, a great deal of space is devoted to British policy in Poland, Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria. And here we have attempts to delude the reader by befogging the essence of the events with endless details of diplomatic negotiations. But the essence has now been established most precisely. It is this—that contrary to inter-Allied agreements, including those signed in the Crimea and at Potsdam, Britain and the USA attempted to set up under their own aegis a belt of states hostile to the Soviet Union. Their means of achieving this end was to be the imposition on the peoples of the Eastern European countries of extremely reactionary governments, those which had been in power before the war and had brought their own countries to national catastrophe. These reactionary intentions were of course modestly veiled by the usual declarations of concern for freedom and democracy. The example of Greece showed in actual fact the meaning which Eden, Churchill, etc., gave to these concepts, and it was far from true freedom and democracy.

Anti-communists talk, regardless of facts, of the export of socialist revolution by the Soviet Union to European countries. These assertions are meant to deceive the trusting. It is a well-known fact that revolution cannot be brought in from outside, that it is the due result of a country's internal development. Bourgeois historians, who have tried to study the history of post-war Europe objectively, have come to the same conclusion.

Of course the USSR afforded immense assistance to the development of socialist revolution in Europe and in Asia. This assistance consisted in that it was by the USSR's efforts primarily that fascism was crushed. The Soviet Union fulfilled its internationalist duty and prevented British and American armed intervention in countries where the peoples had set revolutionary changes in motion. The progressive British journal *Labour Monthly*, reviewing Gabriel Kolko's *The Politics of War*, summarises his main conclusion as follows: "Wherever the Soviet Union was able to 'hold the ring', i.e. to prevent Western intervention, social revolution has triumphed, and has developed onwards to socialism. Similar development has been prevented elsewhere only by armed intervention, or the threat of armed

intervention, on the part of Britain or the United States."

The first half of 1945 was marked by an increase in the British Government's hostility to the USSR. This was the period of the Soviet Union's military triumph, and of mounting social revolution in Europe. Churchill at this time was, in his own words, ready to "go to the verge of war with Russia".

In July 1945 Eden formulated his own attitude to the USSR, in a note to Churchill, as follows: "At previous meetings such as Tehran and Yalta we have met in the knowledge that Russia was bearing a heavy burden in this war, and that her casualties and the devastation of her country were worse than anything that we or Americans were suffering. But now all this is over. Russia is not losing a man at the present time."

This speaks volumes. It shows that while hostilities lasted the British Government was obliged to take the interests of the Soviet Union into account, because victory was being bought at the price of much Soviet blood. But then, when victory was secure, there was no longer any need to stand upon ceremony with the Soviet Union.

Some British historians note that at this time Eden's attitude to the Soviet Union was if anything even more hostile than Churchill's. David Dilks quotes a minute of March 1945, from Eden, in which he says that "a breakdown [with the USSR—V.T.] seems inevitable".

What infuriated Eden and Churchill was the fact that they had no power to control the Soviet Union. On June 11, 1945, Cadogan recorded: "Cabinet at 5.30... P.M. looks rather pale, and indulged in a long monologue in a depressed undertone—all about the menace of Russia... Quite obvious but nothing to be done about it."

At the time of the Berlin Conference, however, a ray of hope seemed to appear before the British leaders. On July 17 Truman informed Churchill that the first atomic bomb had been exploded near Alamogordo in New Mexico. Churchill was delighted beyond description: at last there was something wherewith to restrain those Russians! On July 23 Churchill's doctor, Lord Moran, noted what he had to say on the subject: "We put the Americans on the bomb. We fired them by suggesting that it could be used in this war. We have an agreement with them. It gives the Americans the power to mould the world... If the Russians had got it, it would have been the end of civilisation... It has just come in time to save the world."

It soon appeared how wrong the enthusing Prime Minister was. Firstly, the American atomic bomb was not able to repress the revolutionary processes after the Second World War. Secondly, the USA was not able to determine, with the aid of the bomb, the fate of the world. Thirdly, in spite of their "agreement", the Americans did not share the secret of atomic bomb production with Britain. But it took several years for all this to transpire.

Meanwhile, in Potsdam, the need was to intimidate the Soviet delegation so as to get some immediate benefit from the making of the bomb. The expectation was that the news of this new weapon would make a powerful impression on the Soviet leaders, that the latter would at once ask to be given the secret of its production and would be prepared to go in for a lot in order to get it and also because of their fear before this new, terrific weapon. Eden's Memoirs state: "On the question of when Stalin was to be told, it was agreed that President Truman should do this after the conclusion of one of our meetings. He did so on July 24th, so briefly that Mr. Churchill and I, who were covertly watching, had some doubts whether Stalin had taken it in. His response was a nod of the head and a brief 'Thank you'. No comment."

Eden's account of this scene is basically correct. According to the recollections of V. N. Pavlov, who was the interpreter on this occasion, Stalin merely nodded slightly, and no "Thank you" was uttered. Eden was not the only one who was left wondering whether Stalin had understood the point of what Truman had told him. Many Western politicians and historians had gone on wondering. And quite in vain. The Soviet leadership had known since the autumn of 1942 of the existing potential for the production of nuclear weapons; they knew the nature of those weapons; they knew it, and drew the necessary conclusions. In the autumn of 1942, during a lull in the fighting, a Junior Lieutenant-Technician called Georgy Nikolayevich Flerov had sent a letter to the State Defence Committee informing them of the theoretical possibility of Germany producing an atomic bomb, and drawing the attention of the USSR's top leadership to the matter. On reading G. N. Flerov's letter, J. V. Stalin sent for Academicians A. F. Ioffe and V. I. Vernadsky, whose scientific interests were cognate to the subject. They were called on to say whether the Germans could prepare a uranium bomb, and what they thought about the cessation of open publication in the West of work concerning uranium.

A. F. Ioffe later related that J. V. Stalin was indignant because a Junior Lieutenant at the front had been able to perceive the danger to the country this represented, but they, the academicians, had not.

During the Berlin Conference Churchill and Eden suffered a violent and unexpected blow—the Conservative Party lost a General Election. In the spring of 1945, with the war against Germany ended, the Conservative leaders had to do something about Parliament. The existing one had been elected in 1935, owing to the war it had continued to function for twice the usual term, and now the election must be held. There was a choice between whether to hold it immediately or to postpone it until the war with Japan was over, which was expected to be at the end of the year. Discussing the matter with Eden, Churchill sent a telegram to him when he was in San Francisco, saying that the Conservatives preferred a June election “although the Russian peril, which I regard as enormous, could be better faced” if the coalition with the Labour Party were preserved intact. Eden came out against retaining the coalition, and in favour of holding the election in June, for in October, he said, there might advance “an even more dangerous period in international affairs than now and increased chances of a Socialist victory”.

Shortly afterwards the Labour Party left the coalition. Churchill formed a caretaker government to serve until after the election, with Conservative Ministers only. Dilks tells us how Churchill, in tears, thanked members of the dissolving coalition for all they had done, and added: “If ever such another mortal danger threatened [evidently he was, as Dilks suggests, thinking of Russia—V.T.], I am sure we should all do the same again.”

The Conservatives went into the election without any clear-cut programme. They thought the electorate would vote for them in gratitude to Churchill, the great war leader. Churchill himself did not for a moment consider it possible that his party might not win. Eden probably also believed in their victory, although in the Memoirs he wrote 30 years later he said that he had had doubts about it.

In May, when Eden came back from San Francisco, the doctors found him to be suffering from a duodenal ulcer, and prescribed six weeks in bed. That meant that he could not take part in the election campaign. Beatrice spoke at meetings in her husband's place.

Eden, sick in bed at Binderton, delivered his election speech over the radio. It was the only one he made during the run-up to the election. It differed from Churchill's speeches in its calmer tone. Eden countered Labour's assertions that they would be better than the Conservatives at maintaining good relations with the Soviet Union by arguments in favour of strengthening links with the United States, which the Conservatives would do better than Labour could. Eden spoke of the economic successes of the USA and stressed that these were the fruits of free enterprise. This was to counter Labour's case for nationalising a number of industries.

Eden's popularity was great, and he was returned a Member of the House of Commons by an impressive majority. But his party had suffered a crushing defeat.

On August 1 Eden had dinner with Churchill; they discussed the election results and came to the conclusion that there was "a strong leftward undertow" running in Britain. How true.

Churchill resigned. On July 28 Eden, as a Minister retiring from office, was given an audience by the King. A new government was formed of Labour Ministers.

Even after many years had passed, Eden could not hide how deeply he had felt this enforced retirement. "It is a common happening," he writes, "that those in power, as their tenure of office continues, find themselves less and less able to contemplate relinquishing it. The vows they made earlier that they would give way to a younger man when the years begin to blunt their faculties, when illness begins to twist their judgement, these they choose to ignore. Power has become a habit they cannot bear to cast off."

Such was his own mood in the summer of 1945. Even the need to take a good rest and regain his health did not soften the blow.

Chapter V

OPPOSITION: THE FIRST POST-WAR DECADE

The defeat of the Conservatives in the 1945 election and the consequent departure from office of the Churchill Government were of some positive value to both Eden and his party. The dialectical force of the proverb "Every dark cloud has a silver lining" was fully operative here.

For capitalist Britain the war had ended in a mixture of triumph and tragedy. The triumph was the victory gained over the most dangerous enemy the country had ever faced, the tragedy was the "dramatic declension in British power". The expression is that used by a British Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan.

British politicians and historians are fond of emphasising that their country had come to the war's end having made heavy material sacrifices; in doing so they usually forget to mention the Soviet Union's contribution to victory. This is how the same Macmillan depicts the price of victory: in 1940 and 1941 Britain had opposed Germany single-handed and Britain and the Empire had put into the field a disproportionately large number of forces. As a result "our enfeeblement, although masked, was real. Apart from the strain upon our whole people involved in the long struggle, we have effected a complete diversion of our economy to war purposes... We had suffered the loss of £1,000 million of our foreign assets; we had incurred an external debt of at least £3,000 million. Our export trade had been largely abandoned, and we had lost many of our best customers either because of their own ruin or because of our inability to supply their needs. In the East, the victory over Japan ... had failed to restore our old prestige." The consequences of all this were "to some extent revealed in the economic crises which struck us one after another in the following years".

In reality though the state of crisis in British industry and trade in the post-war period was the result not only and not so much of the consequences of the war, as of the processes

of the transformation—greatly accelerated by the war—of the British economy, which for many decades had been developing distortedly, plundering and oppressing the colonial peoples. When in 1945 the USA unceremoniously stopped lend-lease deliveries, Britain found she had a deficit of £1,200 million per annum on her imports payments. This catastrophic situation cannot be explained solely by the war, it was something that British imperialism had been logically, inevitably coming to, by virtue of its colonial character.

The politicians and ideologists prefer to say nothing about the most grievous consequences of the war for Britain. They were of a political nature, and foremost among them was the triumph of socialism, the strengthening of its positions. This found expression, firstly, in the fact that the Soviet Union, far from having disappeared from the face of the earth, as the strategists of the bourgeois world had expected, had strengthened its military and political positions immensely. Its role in the world was by the end of the war (and this infuriated the London politicians) much more considerable than that of Britain.

Secondly, in Europe and in Asia the socialist revolution that had long been building up came to fruition, a socialist system emerged, which meant a radical change in the political balance in favour of socialism, not only in those continents but world-wide. The field for British imperialism had narrowed.

Thirdly, in the countries of Western Europe a revolutionary situation evolved, pregnant with the victory of socialist revolution. British imperialism found itself facing the possibility of a socialist system being established in Western Europe, and the ruling circles of Britain were none too certain that it might not spread to Britain itself. This admission by one of Eden's biographers, Campbell-Johnson, is significant: "It is quite possible that in the prevailing mood of demobilisation and of self-doubt in the West *the whole of Europe* [my italics—V.T.] might have seceded to communism by constitutional process." It should be noted that in speaking of the possibility of socialism being established by the popular election of relevantly composed legislative bodies, the author makes no exception for Britain. Indeed, he considers that under certain conditions the Parliament elected in 1945 might have functioned in this direction. In it the Labour Party had an overwhelming majority

over the other parties and it could therefore have effected far-reaching transformations constitutionally.

Fourthly, a new stage in the national liberation revolution was beginning, which was soon to shatter totally the British colonial empire, the biggest of all imperialist colonial domains. Since the colonial factor had played a huge part in the formation of British capitalism, the blow which the national liberation movement struck against capitalist Britain was especially heavy.

The ruling circles of that country, despite all their political experience, did not in 1945 fully realise the dangers threatening them. With considerable naiveté they imagined that they would be able to cope with the many difficulties facing them in this situation.

The result of the General Election of 1945 obliged Churchill to resign as soon as it was announced. Churchill used his prerogative as a retiring Premier to advise King George VI to "send for Attlee". The Labour leader was duly summoned to Buckingham Palace to "kiss hands", i.e., to be empowered to form a government.

The Conservative Disraeli, a major figure of the 19th century, wrote that "there are few positions less inspiring than those of a discomfited party". It applies to the leaders of the party too: Churchill-Eden. The psychological shock of the electoral disaster was too great altogether. The bewilderment of the Tory leaders was beyond doubt. They could not decide in their own minds whether power had gone to the Labour Party for a long term or whether the Conservatives might succeed in getting it back in the foreseeable future. Eden at this time had serious thoughts of accepting the post of Secretary-General of the newly formed United Nations Organisation. That would have meant he was giving up his governmental career as finished.

Churchill, during his first year back in Opposition, was also tormented by doubts as to his future. His situation was worse than Eden's. He was very much older—over seventy. Churchill took his party's electoral defeat much harder than Eden. He was shaken to the depths of his soul by the "black ingratitude" shown by his fellow-countrymen—for he considered that victory in the war had been his own, personal triumph above all. He complained to his personal physician, Lord Moran, that "victory has turned to sackcloth and ashes".

On top of this, there was dissatisfaction with Churchill

among the upper echelons of the Conservative Party. Chewing over the reasons for their defeat at the polls, the Tories quite rightly blamed their aging leader for having contributed to that defeat by his unconcerned attitude: the Conservatives had confined themselves to criticising the Labour Party and had not troubled to place a positive programme of their own before the voters. There was unfavourable comment also on Churchill's autocratic manner, which he had assumed towards his colleagues in the wartime Cabinet. People do not take kindly to a position of superiority assumed by another, especially when it is assumed quite categorically, as a self-evident fact.

The ex-Premier was in danger of being made a scapegoat. But the Conservatives could not agree to this. Churchill was their main political trump, he as it were redeemed the culpability of the Conservative Party for the catastrophic and discredited policy of Neville Chamberlain. So the mutterings against the Tory leader proved harmless. He went off to Lake Como, then to a fashionable holiday resort in Florida, and meditated on what to do next.

The doubts were over by the summer of 1946. Churchill decided to go on as leader of the Conservatives, and to make a fight for power. On June 27 he said to Moran: "A short time ago I was ready to retire and die gracefully. Now I'm going to stay and have them out." So Churchill was still, as before, leader of the Conservative Party and future Premier if they were re-elected, and Eden was his deputy and official successor in both posts.

The fact that the Conservative Party was in opposition meant that Eden now had plenty of free time. He used it to mend his health, to rest, travel, settle his personal affairs and improve his finances. Previously he had had no business interests, now he decided to make up for lost time. In October 1945 Eden was made a director of the Westminster Bank, one of the biggest banks in the country. Due to a merger of this bank with the Becketts' family banking concern, Rupert Beckett, Beatrice Eden's uncle, was now the Chairman of its board of directors. Soon the ex-Foreign Secretary was a director of the Westminster International Bank, of the Phoenix Assurance Company, of Rio Tinto Zinc (a company concerned with mining of non-ferrous metals), etc., etc.

Eden was very useful to these companies, for as a former Cabinet Minister he was party to a vast fund of information

that enabled him to give well-founded advice on future operations, especially those involving foreign countries.

Eden's direct connections with financial and industrial concerns, first made in 1945, proved firm and lasting, as might have been expected.

Gradually everything settled down. In the Conservative section within Parliament, in accordance with tradition adhered to by the party, a leading group was formed consisting, as usual, of former Ministers: the party leader and his advisers. As long ago as 1929 the press took to calling this group the Shadow Cabinet, and this name has become firmly established as denoting the leading nucleus within a party in Opposition. The members of the Shadow Cabinet of this period—Eden, Butler, Macmillan, Stanley, Lyttleton, Morrison, Crookshank, Winterton, Maxwell Fyfe, Salisbury, Woolton, Swinton and some others—were allocated spheres of activity to correspond to their experience and interests.

Churchill, particularly at first, took little part in the organisation of the Opposition's activity in Parliament. But as leader of the party he would invite the members of the Shadow Cabinet to lunch with him about once a fortnight (sometime much less frequently), at the Savoy—Churchill loved pomp and circumstance.

The former Prime Minister now visited the House of Commons only rarely, and did not often speak. The House with the Front Bench occupied by Labour men in the full panoply of power did not appeal to him. And thus the everyday leadership of the Conservative group in Parliament devolved upon Anthony Eden. His position was made more difficult by the echoes of Churchill's thunderous war-time oratory still rolling through the halls of Westminster. His hearers and readers naturally expected something of the same sort from his successor. He had to operate in Churchill's shadow, and it was not easy.

He, unlike his patron, was not a good orator. His tact and sensitivity would not have allowed him to attempt to copy Churchill. Eden's speeches of this period are what one might call fair to middling efforts. Bardens says outright that Eden's speeches on home policy are unreadable. To the end of his career Eden retained his fondness for the cliché, the commonplace, the smoothly non-committal. Eden rarely employed humour, and the attempts he did make to enliven his speeches in that way were not very successful.

Bardens tells us that Churchill frequently offered his favourite lessons in oratorical art. He advised Eden to hold his notes boldly in his hand and wave them about, and openly consult them when necessary, instead of peering furtively at them as if ashamed of needing them. Churchill considered he should follow his example and have special spectacles made which would enable him to read notes from five feet away. But all the advice was in vain.

Eden now had to deal not only with matters of foreign policy but with complex and difficult economic and social questions, and with problems of Empire. Eden was "heir apparent", so as possible future Prime Minister he was obliged to show an understanding of all aspects of governmental activity. The country had to be accustomed to seeing him as a statesman of wide-ranging powers. Eden's speeches in the House of Commons therefore dealt with the most varied questions: the nationalisation of the coal industry and of power stations; shortages in the supplies of food, fuel, housing, petrol; trade union legislation; the rights of the House of Lords and its imminent reform; university voting rights in Parliamentary elections; the Budget; state control over the economy; agriculture; education.

He did not find it easy. Many of these questions did not interest him, but he had to speak on them as a future Prime Minister. Eden put an immense amount of work into the study of these problems alien to him and into the preparation of his speeches on them. Once more it was apparent that the struggle for power was something that demanded much labour.

Some people believe that Eden had an easy life. One might say that he had an interesting life, a very interesting one, but easy is hardly the word for it. The lot of a modern statesman, in spite of the numerous auxiliary staff at his disposal, is far from easy. A heavy burden of responsibility for affairs of state rests on his shoulders, he has to do an immense amount of work. Eden worked for long hours every day, sometimes working himself to the point of exhaustion.

The stress had an adverse effect on his health. In spite of his blooming appearance and athletic build, Eden could not boast a healthy constitution. In childhood Anthony had been frail and delicate. In the mid-thirties he had been seriously ill. At the very end of the war Eden once again fell gravely ill. His health deteriorated to such an extent that

there were fears for his life. But the danger passed. In 1948, however, Eden was in hospital again.

Naturally the question arose of whether his state of health would allow him to act as head of the party and of the government, should the need arise. He did all he could to calm any fears on this score. On the day of his fifty-first birthday he addressed a gathering of 7,000 Young Conservatives at the Albert Hall, then went and played five hard sets of tennis at his house near London, with some of the officers of a nearby air base. This was of course reported in the press, and was intended to re-assure those who read it that Eden's physical powers were not declining. But in actual fact all was not quite so rosy.

Eden's health was suffering from troubles in his family life. He had scarcely had time to recover from his grief at the death of his elder son Simon when another heavy blow came upon him—in January 1947 his wife left him. Everything points to the situation having been building up for a long time previously. In December 1946, in the Christmas season, Eden, accompanied by Beatrice and their younger and only remaining son, Nicholas, who had just finished his schooling at Eton, left for the USA on the luxury liner *Queen Elizabeth*, intending to spend a holiday on the island of Barbados. It was the last trip they were to take together. When the liner docked at New York, Beatrice left her husband for good. Nicholas tried to bring his parents together again, but in vain. The marriage was over.

The reasons for this family disaster are not altogether clear. Both parties took care to keep the true background of the case hidden. Eden refused point-blank to give any explanations whatever to the press. Beatrice found it harder to escape the reporters, and her explanation was that their life together had not been a success because she was not made to be a statesman's wife. The newspaper men were meant to take this as indicating that she did not like his frequent trips abroad and his constant preoccupation with the Foreign Office.

It is hard to believe in this version. After all Beatrice had known, when she married Eden, about his chosen field of work. If one admits that at that time she had not realised quite how alien to her the life-style of a politician would be (which is quite possible), that still does not explain why it took twenty years and more for her to become fully aware that the position of a Foreign Secretary's wife was not for her.

Nicholas continued to live with his father, and they had a warm and loving relationship. That was all that was left to Eden of family life.

In April 1950 father and son, accompanied by Eden's Parliamentary Private Secretary and his wife, travelled to Cannes for a holiday. A friend of Anthony's, Lieutenant-Colonel Alan Palmer of the Intelligence Service, had invited them to stay at his villa. Eden was depressed and could find no heart even for his beloved tennis and swimming.

It was at this time that Eden set divorce proceedings on foot, and on June 8, 1950, the court gave him his decree. The hearing took only five minutes. Beatrice sent no one to represent her, and Eden was the only witness called on his side.

As soon as the decision of the court was announced Eden hastily left the building to make his escape from the pestering newsmen.

In New York the journalists besieged Beatrice's flat, but they got little from her. Mrs. Eden again repeated to *The Daily Mirror* man the same version as before: "I was never fitted to be a politician's wife." Eden's biographers have taken this to be a hint that she did not consider him entirely responsible for the break-up of their marriage. "I am good friends with Mr. Eden," Beatrice was quoted as saying, "and admire him tremendously as a politician." In all her interviews she wished Anthony every success, and no one doubted the sincerity of her words.

Dennis Bardens writes that Mrs. Eden was living "in a small flat full of her paintings—like her former husband, she is an enthusiastic and talented artist, and later in the year (1950) she held an exhibition of her landscapes and still-life paintings, in oils".

In the second half of 1950 Beatrice flew to England to see her son, who had been called up to do his National Service. Here she was again under attack from the reporters. She denied that she had any plans for re-marrying. This arose because there were rumours that she might be contemplating engagement to Dr. Robert Hedges, a gynaecologist whom she had met in Bermuda in 1948. He had served in the American forces in Italy, and had the rank of Major. Hedges was in his fifties, was fond of art and a good pianist, and had a big private practice as well as a post in a large New York hospital. The talk of a possible marriage between him and Beatrice had started when his friends noticed a life-size portrait of her in his flat.

There was another version also current. This had it that Beatrice had met an American working for the State Department and the US strategic services and had fallen in love with him, and that this was the cause of her leaving Eden.

It should be noted though, that thanks to the restraint observed on both sides in a difficult situation, the break-up of Eden's family had no untoward effect upon his position in public life. The fact that he was the innocent party in the case doubtless had its effect. The biographers deal with this episode in Eden's life in neutral terms.

Eden had always been fond of travel and now, when his official, diplomatic journeyings were at an end, he still continued to spend much time abroad. He was usually accompanied by his son; they had drawn even closer since his mother had gone, and they shared "a love of travel, of strange sights and sounds, of tennis and gin rummy".

In 1948 Eden went to Iran, and despite the fact that formally speaking he was now only a private citizen, he was received semi-officially and with marked attention. Aware that the position of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, which was entirely British-owned and had a monopoly over Iranian oil, was unstable, Eden made himself thoroughly acquainted on the spot with its activities, inspecting the oil-bearing districts of Khuzistan and the huge refinery at Abadan. And everywhere he went he talked to the Iranians in their own language. It is said that his Persian was fluent, as he had kept up and improved the knowledge of the language he had first gained at university.

Oil-rich areas continued to be the object of Eden's interest throughout the rest of this journey too. From Iran he went on to the islands of Bahrain, where he was given a warm welcome. The Sheikh presented him with an antique Arab sword, richly wrought with gold and pearls, also a set of costly Arab robes.

From Bahrain the travellers proceeded to Saudi Arabia and enjoyed a pleasant holiday as guests of King Ibn Saud at his capital of Riyadh. Sumptuous banquets in Arab style were laid on in Eden's honour. At one of these 12 sheep and 2 young camels were served. This exotic kind of entertainment pleased the father and naturally greatly impressed the son.

Here too Eden was the recipient of rich gifts. The King gave him a gold watch and a jewelled dagger. Following

the custom of the East, the English guest enquired what the King would like as a present in return. Ibn Saud expressed a wish for a sporting gun. In London Eden had to pay £220 for an appropriate one.

When the travellers returned to Britain, the customs men were faced with a difficulty: were they to charge customs duty on the gifts Eden had received, or not? The duty would have amounted to a considerable sum. It was not the first time Eden had brought such presents back from the Middle East. During the war Churchill and Eden had met the King of Saudi Arabia, and the latter had presented them with a casket filled with precious stones. But the Exchequer had promptly got its hands on that, declaring it to be an "official gift" and therefore government property. The government had paid for the return present to the King, which was a Rolls-Royce. This precedent looked not too hopeful for Eden. But this time, in 1948, everything was settled amicably. The Customs let Eden's gifts through duty-free on the grounds that they were ceremonial gifts from the head of a foreign state. He retained them as his personal property.

The following year Eden went on an extended tour taking in the various countries of the British Commonwealth. The route followed was the same as that taken a quarter of a century earlier, when he had acted as special correspondent of the *Yorkshire Post*. Twenty-five years is a long time. In that period Eden had made his political career and become famous not only within Britain and the Commonwealth but far beyond their bounds.

The post-war years had seen other changes in Britain's colonial empire besides the change of names: this was a period of the break-up of the empire under the impact of national liberation revolution. During 1947-1948, the peoples of Asia which had been under British rule gained their independence. India, Pakistan, Ceylon and Burma set out upon the road of independent development. It was clear that a similar fate was in store for British possessions in the Middle East also.

That was the situation when Eden started out on his tour. His aims were by no means those of a tourist. He wanted to convince himself from personal observation on the spot whether the Commonwealth would survive in altered shape. It was vitally necessary to be sure about this, for in those years British ruling circles were of the opinion that Britain

could remain a Great Power only if it had the support of the Commonwealth, without which it would become a second-rate country.

Eden visited Canada, then New Zealand and Australia, and on the return leg of the journey Malaya, India and Pakistan. In 70 days he covered a distance of 40 thousand miles. As a senior statesman (though for the time being not in office) Eden was received by the heads of the states concerned and spoke at many large gatherings, meetings and receptions. Of course he also visited the colourful Eastern bazaars and admired the exotic scenery.

The speeches which Eden made after his return to Britain, summing up his impressions from the trip, are a model of political hypocrisy. He referred to the "stable" links of the British Commonwealth. And this after British colonial administrators had had to clear out of India, Pakistan, Ceylon and Burma; when the people of Malaya were carrying on a fierce armed struggle against the colonialists; when Australia and New Zealand had switched their orientation from Britain to the United States; when American capital was inexorably forcing its way into the Commonwealth countries and weakening their economic links with London; when the helplessness displayed by Britain during the war years in the Pacific and in Asia, had reduced her prestige there to the lowest possible ebb.

The tempo of political life speeded up considerably after the Second World War, one event followed hard upon another, the reaction of public opinion to the changes taking place was much more rapid. In 1945 it had seemed as though a period of stable Labour dominance in the country's political life had begun and that the Conservatives had been banished to the side-lines for a long time to come; but two or three years passed, and the situation was transformed.

It now became clear that electoral defeat had been a good thing for Eden and for his party. It enabled the Conservatives to avoid responsibility for a number of highly reactionary steps taken by Britain in the early years after the war. Throughout the period when the British Labour Government under Attlee and Bevin was raising the banner of anti-Sovietism and together with the imperialists of the USA was hastily knocking up an anti-communist front, Churchill and Eden were sitting on the Opposition benches, taking no apparent part in government policy.

The fact that in 1945 right-wing Labour was on top and

able to form a government proved to be a great advantage for British imperialism. In the turbulent post-war years the Conservatives themselves could not have achieved a fraction of what right-wing Labour did to save British imperialism.

Attlee's Government was made up of men of undoubted ability and energy, men who had been schooled in administering affairs of state under Churchill, since they had taken part in the coalition government from May 1940 to May 1945. Churchill and his associates trained up their Labour colleagues not only in the spirit of total loyalty to British imperialism, but in unbounded hatred for socialist and national liberation revolution, for the Soviet Union. This is evidenced by the entire subsequent activity of members of the Attlee Government.

Churchill gave his approval to all the appointments made by Attlee with one exception. Or to be more precise, he made sure that Attlee, who had intended to entrust the Foreign Office to Hugh Dalton, changed his mind and appointed Ernest Bevin Foreign Secretary as Churchill and Eden wanted.

At first glance Churchill's choice may seem strange. Both Dalton and Bevin had served in his own wartime government. Dalton's background was aristocratic, he had been educated in establishments reserved for the privileged few, he had a good knowledge of international relations and was an erudite politician. Whereas Bevin's education had gone no farther than elementary school, and his career had been made as a trade union official, rising from minor to "boss" status and traversing (as often happens in Britain) from left wing to the extreme right of Labour Party and trade union leadership. From the point of view of Conservative interests, Churchill was absolutely right to prefer Bevin to Dalton. It was of much greater advantage to have the fight for British imperialist interests in the arena of foreign policy carried through by someone who had come up from the dockside working class, rather than by a bourgeois intellectual, albeit one belonging to the Labour Party. Added to which, Bevin was distinguished by great obstinacy and will-power; it was clear that his line in foreign policy would coincide fully with the Conservative position, and as regarded hostility to the Soviet Union Bevin was probably more to be relied on than Dalton.

Eden built up a relationship of close, though largely hidden from the public eye, collaboration with Bevin. On the

very day when the retiring Foreign Secretary went to Buckingham Palace to hand in his seals to the monarch he had a meeting with his successor, visiting the same place to receive those same seals. They had a quick discussion on the progress of the conference in Berlin, and Eden furnished his Labour colleague with advice on how to resist Soviet proposals concerning Poland.* "Bevin listened and said that he would do his best," records Eden in his Memoirs.

He also tells us: "Ernest and I had been good colleagues during our years in the War Cabinet and often discussed foreign affairs together. At that time I was closer to him than to any other member of his party, and the friendship between us lasted until his death." Eden says that he himself was in complete agreement with the aims of Bevin's foreign policy, and with what he did. Like-minded, they often met together. Bevin would invite Eden to his room in the House of Commons where they would have informal discussions of foreign policy matters. In Parliamentary debates Eden would usually speak after Bevin, and support him. "I would publicly have agreed with him more, if I had not been anxious to embarrass him less," admits Eden. Meaning that Labour opinion might have made use of praise coming from a Conservative ex-Foreign Secretary in order to criticise Bevin.

From the very beginning of the Labour Government's operation it was obvious that Bevin was acting as Eden would have acted. Oliver Stanley, a leading Conservative and Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Shadow Cabinet, once commented in a Parliamentary speech on this continuity in foreign policy as follows. During the election campaign the Labour Party proclaimed from the platforms that its "return would create a new world... Well, we have now had a fortnight of the new world and certainly in the new world there are still some familiar speeches... The Foreign Secretary, in that splendid speech he made on Monday, which was acclaimed in all parts of the House, made me wonder whether in his spare time ... he had not been dipping into that brilliant old play, *The Importance of Being Anthony*."**

Bevin and Eden paid one another fulsome public compliments, and made no secret of their mutual liking. In general terms, they were united in their negative attitude to the

* It was the question of Poland's Western frontiers.

** A play of words referring to Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

revolutionary processes taking place throughout the world. On the matter of particular questions of foreign policy, Bevin's convictions and standpoint were formed under the influence of the Foreign Office apparatus, and primarily that of the quiet but stubborn and insistent Permanent Under-Secretary, Alexander Cadogan, and in latter years of his successor Orme Sargent. It was these men who wrote all Bevin's speeches.

Macmillan, who himself took over the Foreign Office later, tells us in his Memoirs: "It is the practice of the Foreign Office ... to serve the Secretary of State on the occasion of a general discussion a long, elaborate but somewhat jejune document composed in the most correct officialese and more like a memorandum than a Parliamentary speech. Bevin would read this out from start to finish, stumbling over the difficult words but plodding on manfully, often regardless of sense and punctuation."

Bevin remained in charge of the Foreign Office until March 9, 1951, when he had to resign. Five weeks later he was dead. He was succeeded by a Labour colleague, Morrison. On July 25, 1951, Macmillan made this entry in his diary: "A long and rather boring foreign affairs debate. Herbert Morrison read out the same ... sort of speech which the F.O. boys used to write for Ernest Bevin."

It is hardly surprising that Eden, during his years in Opposition, showed no great zeal in polemicising with the Labour Party. The *Star* wrote: "Mr. Anthony Eden is disappointing the Tory die-hards. They had been looking to him for a fighting lead, but he seems to be showing little enthusiasm for the role of saboteur No. 1."

During those years the main events in the life of the Conservative Party took place outside the walls of Parliament. Eden played what may be called a leading part in them, but the main motive force behind them was a small group of comparatively young Conservatives, Eden's contemporaries and colleagues. Principal among these were Lord Woolton and Butler. The members of this group had drawn a practical conclusion from the Conservative defeat in the recent election; their party needed a radical re-structuring, both organisational and ideological, to make it capable of a contest with the Labour Party for the votes of the electorate. The world was changing rapidly, the situation of the country and the problems facing it were being transformed. The voter too was a different person now, with a better grasp of political

affairs. The party required adjusting to all these changes.

The organisational re-structuring was carried through under the direction of Lord Woolton. The way in which he came to be concerned with this task is sufficiently surprising. He had been Food Minister in the Churchill Government, but was not a Conservative Party member. He considered himself an Independent, and held mildly liberal views. Woolton became a member of the Conservative Party on the day when its electoral defeat was announced. And straight away he set about re-structuring it. In 1946 he was formally made Chairman of the party.

"Woolton," writes Macmillan, "was not only a great organiser, but he was also the best salesman that I have ever known." Woolton approached the re-structuring of the party like a true businessman—it had to be done in such a way that it could "sell" the voter the "goods" which the Conservatives had on offer, and take his vote. The "goods", of course, had to be made to suit the voters' tastes as far as possible, and their Conservative contents must above all be presented attractively packaged.

Woolton spent time searching for a new name for the party, one that would cancel out the advantage of the Labour Party, which called itself "Socialist". He wanted the Conservatives to become the "Union Party". The Conservative Party, wrote Woolton, must represent "unity of the Empire, the essential unity between the Crown, the Government, and the people, embracing the idea ... that we dislike class conflict almost as much as we dislike either ... vague internationalism ... or the foreign creeds of Marxian Socialism or Russian Communism". Here we have the desire to retain the old, imperial colonialism and the monarchy, and the denial of class conflict, and unconditional hostility to proletarian internationalism, socialism and communism.

Particular effort was put into showing the Conservatives as the party which represented the interests not of a single class but of the whole nation, including the working people. The method of selecting the party's Parliamentary candidates was changed. While previously local Conservative bodies had nominated people who were ready to donate maximally high sums to party funds (sometimes as much as £1,000 a year), now the rule was to be that a candidate should contribute to election funds no more than £25 p.a., and a Member of Parliament not more than £50 p.a. All electoral expenses were to be paid for out of party funds.

Energetic measures were taken to strengthen local party organisations. Full-time agents were appointed, with a good salary and pension arrangements. At the same time, the use made of volunteer activists was expanded, people who would act as permanent proselytisers for the party. The centre of gravity in propaganda work was shifted from the big occasions—meetings, bazaars, etc.—to individual work with individual voters. This was to be in the voter's own home. As Macmillan writes: "This technique, which he subsequently called 'Operation Door-Knocker', became a fundamental part of the new Conservative approach to the electors." The party representative's knock on the voter's door was to be heard the length and breadth of Britain, and the main mass of voters started to get their regular dose of Conservative propaganda, administered by someone they came to know in the course of personal conversation. With an eye to the psychology of the average Briton, Woolton organised the selling of the Conservative "goods" on the same lines as the promotion by doorstep salesmen of refrigerators or washing machines. Politics had become business even in outward form, but it was done in such a way that that observation should not occur to the mind of the British voter.

The re-structuring required the expenditure of vast sums, and Woolton got them. He announced that a million pounds was needed, and the monopolies contributed it to the Conservative Party's funds.

No new name was adopted for the party, but a programme along the lines suggested by Woolton was worked out, very carefully. Here the leading part was taken by Butler. Macmillan, who actively participated in this work, describes its object as "the formulation and popularisation of new policies, based indeed on old principles but adapted to new and changing conditions". By 1945 the mass of voters had formed their own opinion of the Conservative Party—on the basis of observable facts, i.e. the actions of Conservative Governments in the 1930s and 1940s—as being a party hostile to their interests, and they voted them out. Now the party bosses were labouring to confuse the voters' minds, give them a different idea of the Conservative Party, but in fact they were only selling the same old "goods" under a new name. The creators of the "new image" of the party invariably stress their own loyalty to the old principles of Conservatism, retained from the previous century.

One of the most influential men in the Conservative Party, the Marquess of Salisbury, formulated the lines along which the new programme of Conservatism was to be constructed. Bearing in mind popular attraction to socialism, he proposed that an alternative "progressive" policy should be offered.

What was this "progressive" policy? Salisbury said: "I see our future in a spreading of capitalism. The fault of the Capitalist system seems to me to be not that there are too many capitalists but too few. We want to have more people owning their own houses, farming their own farms, sharing in the control of the industries in which they work." These ideas were far from new. The crux of them lies in giving as broad a range of people as possible an interest in the continued existence of capitalism, especially people in the top stratum of the working class, the dominant section in the trade unions and the Labour Party. That is why the Butler Committee, appointed to work out Conservative policy on labour questions, had much consultation with trade union leaders as well as with representatives of the business world.

The result of all this was the birth of an important Conservative programme document, the so-called "Industrial Charter". In it the old principles of Conservatism were deftly disguised by new theses, dictated both by the need to fight the revolutionary movement and confront socialism and by the demands posed by the growth, in extent and in depth, of state-monopoly capitalism. While declaring themselves to be, as before, supporters of private enterprise, but keeping in mind the fact that a number of the country's industries was being nationalised and that there was certain state control in this sphere, the Conservatives came out in favour of a mixed economy. The Industrial Charter proclaimed (obviously with its tongue in its cheek) the Tories' determination to eliminate unemployment, improve the social security system, and keep control over a number of sectors of economic life in the hands of the state, while encouraging private initiative wherever possible.

The authors of the Industrial Charter did their best to make it as generalised as they could, avoiding definite proposals. It was not detail that was important, they said, but the general tone and temper of the document. That was not quite the point though. Much that was included in the Charter, particularly the part dealing with the situation of the working class, the Conservative leaders had no intention of carrying out, and they were trying to give as little grounds

as they could for later accusations of political trickery.

The bourgeois press, naturally, did its best to advertise the Tory "new image". The *Spectator* declared that "the last excuse for labelling the Conservative Party as at present constituted as reactionary" was now gone.

It has to be admitted that the sum total of all these measures, all these efforts to "work on" the British electorate, soon brought the Conservatives their reward. A contributing factor to this success was the existence of strong reactionary tendencies in the policy of the Labour Party, then in power.

The upper echelons of the Conservatives entirely approved the reorganisation of the party that had been thus brought about. Eden, Macmillan, Butler and Salisbury all had essentially the same attitude to the aims and objects set forth in its programme documents. Their speeches of this period, and documents and personal memoirs published later, all bear witness to this.

In September 1947 Eden published a volume of his speeches under the title *Freedom and Order*. The title was his own idea. (Incidentally, the book's success was less than modest; as one critic remarked, until its appearance he would never have thought it possible "to say so much and say so little".) Macmillan in his speeches also stressed that the Conservatives wanted to see contemporary problems settled in such a way as to secure freedom as well as order. This was not just a politician's catchword. In the conditions of turbulent revolutionary change taking place throughout the world, the main aim of the Conservative Party really was the preservation of freedom—bourgeois freedom, the freedom of arbitrary action in the economic, political and ideological spheres; and the preservation of order—bourgeois order, i.e. the capitalist social system.

Much publicity was given in the press at the time, and in later literature, to a concept formulated by Eden regarding the social structure of Britain in the mid-20th century. Speaking at the annual Tory Conference in October 1946, he said: "There is one single principle that will unite all the solutions that we shall seek... The objective of Socialism is state ownership of all the means of production, distribution and exchange. Our objective is a nation-wide, property-owning democracy."

The meaning of this vague expression Eden interpreted as follows: "Whereas the Socialist purpose is the concentration of ownership in the hands of the State, ours is the distribu-

tion of ownership over the widest practicable number of individuals." This thesis was hailed, and still is hailed, as an "important discovery" in the theory of British Conservatism.

Propaganda has presented Eden's formula as if it were something fresh and original. But Salisbury wrote the same thing, and Macmillan too maintained it. What is more, it was nothing new for Eden himself, since he had been advancing much the same idea in the mid-twenties.

When it voted the Labour Party into power in 1945, the British people was eager to see radical changes in the life of the country. The grim thirties—economic crisis, mass armies of people unemployed and hungry, extremely low standards of living for working people, a misguided and adventurist foreign policy—must never come again.

The Labour Party carried through a series of far-reaching reforms which, according to Churchill, "no Conservative Government would have dared to do". These measures were intended to calm and satisfy the masses of the people. And they were successful in this. But at the same time, the reforms of the forties had the object of bolstering up the economic positions of British state-monopoly capitalism. Some industries were nationalised, but this was state-capitalist and not socialist nationalisation.

The ruling classes were compelled to make concessions in the social sphere so as to forestall the development of revolutionary struggle within the country. The extent of the concessions made shows how greatly class opposition had built up. But the British bourgeoisie is a past-master in the art of social manoeuvre; at the earliest possible moment it did its best to transfer to the backs of the working people themselves the lion's share of the expenditure required for the operation of this system of reforms.

In the sphere of international relations, confrontation with the forces of progress and socialism was for British capitalism even sharper than it was within Britain. British imperialism saw a direct threat to itself in the development of socialist revolution in Europe and in Asia, and in the growth of the USSR's might and of its influence in international affairs. The enhanced international prestige of the USSR served to impede the realisation of the plans for British domination in Europe. And British ruling circles saw Soviet prestige as being also one of the reasons for the exacerbation of class contradictions within Britain herself,

and for the growth of the national liberation struggle in its colonial empire. After the war, confrontation with the USSR and with socialism became the main line of British foreign policy.

That was certainly how Eden understood the main import of his own activities in the post-war years. *Full Circle*, that volume of his Memoirs which deals with the period from spring 1945 to January 1957, opens with a chapter giving in general outline the foreign policy pursued by Britain between 1945 and 1951. Practically the entire text of this chapter is taken up by one theme: the "Soviet threat" and the need to counter it.

The author is undismayed by the fact that Britain and the USSR were bound by a twenty-year treaty of alliance and cooperation in the post-war period, signed in 1942. "Allied unity in war," writes Eden, "crumbled at the first touch of peace." What was it that really troubled Eden as regards the Soviet Union? Germany's total defeat in the war, he writes, had created a situation in Europe where "Russia saw no need to seek a Western ally, still less to pay a price for one". An unequivocal formulation. Eden is unhappy with the fact that the USSR, having gained victory, had ensured its own security and therefore had no intention of "paying a price" to the Western powers for alliance with them. The "price" the writer has in mind is that the USSR should have been prepared to accept the diktat of Britain and the USA as to the post-war peace settlement. The ruling circles of those countries were much concerned to deprive the USSR of the fruits of its victory in the Second World War, and since it was clearly not prepared to stand for this, it thereupon became transformed for them from an ally into an enemy. This is the theme-song of British Government documents of the time, of Eden's Memoirs, of Churchill's books, and of Macmillan's Memoirs.

In the interests of post-war confrontation with the USSR, it was highly essential for British ruling circles that they should make themselves secure from their own people, who continued to see the USSR as an ally in the future too. In one Central Office of Information publication it is stated that the rupture of Britain and the USA with the USSR had not taken place earlier partly in view of the fact that the peoples of the Western countries retained their sympathy for the Russian people, remembering with admiration its heroic effort in the war, and did not want to see a complete rupture

between the former allies. So their rulers needed to blot out those kindly feelings towards the USSR which had flourished in the years of the joint struggle against the common enemy, and inculcate in their stead distrust and hatred for the socialist state. That was to be the moral and psychological foundation for a foreign policy hostile to the Soviet Union.

So Britain's imperialist forces launched a broad campaign urging upon the British people a spirit of hatred and enmity towards the Soviet Union and towards socialism. The Conservatives were at the head of this campaign. Churchill's notorious Fulton speech, with its call for preventive war against the USSR, is a convincing demonstration of the direction in which British ruling circles wished to turn British and world public opinion. Every means of ideological pressure was mobilised and brought into play.

A very active part in this unseemly deed was played by the Attlee-Bevin Government. During the first eighteen months in office the Labour leaders did not risk coming out officially with insinuations and slander against the USSR, but later they dropped the mask. "At the close of the war," writes Eden, "our country was in no mood to be alerted to this new [Soviet] danger and it took a man of stature and sincere conviction, first to discover the extent of the danger for himself, and then to lead his people... This Bevin did and it is his enduring memorial." Yes, Bevin fully deserved this praise from Eden. He did much to "lead" the British people against the USSR.

The line in foreign policy pursued by the Labour Government in the years 1945-1951 entirely suited the Conservatives' concepts. "During this period it was Winston Churchill who set the lead for Britain's foreign policy," writes Broad, and he is quite correct. At Fulton Churchill advanced a policy from "positions of strength" against the Soviet Union and the world communist movement, he proposed the organisation of an Anglo-American bloc to carry such a policy through, and he raised on high the banner of the cold war. Soon, in another speech in Zurich, he called for the creation of a united Europe to oppose the USSR, which should include a restored and re-militarised Germany by way of a shock counterrevolutionary force.

The Labour Government began feverishly carrying the programme out. Together with the US Government it set in motion the Marshall Plan, by means of which the econom-

ic and political positions of European capitalism were to be shored up against the growing revolutionary movement. As a result Europe was split into two opposing groups of states, and the basis was created for building up an aggressive Western European military and political bloc. It was the efforts of the British Government above all which led to the formation in 1948 of a Western Alliance bringing together Britain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxemburg, i.e. a separate grouping of states headed by Britain and spearheaded against the USSR and other socialist countries.

A year later the North Atlantic Pact was signed which brought into being the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), a military and political alliance of Western European states plus the USA and Canada. The participants in NATO united on the basis of the desire to preserve the capitalist order by all means and to struggle against the USSR, other socialist countries, and the international communist and national liberation movement.

In the summer of 1950 Britain entered the war against the Korean People's Democratic Republic. The Labour Government made use of the Korean war to "justify" setting in train a radical re-armament, which before long resulted in an armaments race lasting many decades and becoming a permanent preoccupation. This was the programme mapped out at Fulton and put into action and carried through with conscientious care by a Labour Government.

The fact that it was Labour representatives applying this aggressive line served to mask its real nature, and to act as a brake upon the struggle by the masses against this imperialist foreign policy. Conservatives highly approve the efforts made by the Attlee-Bevin Government to put into practice Churchill's Fulton designs. In 1959, writing with the benefit of some historical perspective, Eden analysed Bevin's actions thus: "His principal difficulty lay in his own party, where, throughout his period as Foreign Secretary, there was an active minority which was cool to his policies or hostile to them. Fortunately Bevin possessed the authority in the Labour Party, and above all in the Trade Union movement, to dominate his critics."

Eden, indirectly, bears witness that the policy of confrontation with the Soviet Union operated jointly by right-wing Labour and the Conservatives, a policy of extreme anti-communism, was far from finding support among the Brit-

ish people, despite ingenious propaganda contrivances from all the reactionary forces in the country. This disapproval on the part of rank-and-file Britons of the government's imperialist foreign policy exerted so strong a pressure on Labour Members of Parliament that many of them came out and spoke in set terms against it, in the House, in their constituencies and in the press.

In the Soviet Union there was full realisation of what the champions of anti-communism were aiming at. On February 24, 1951, Moscow sent a Note to London pointing out that the British Government, so long as "it had need of the Soviet Union, without which it could not gain victory over Hitler Germany, had to some extent restrained ... its hostile attitude to the Soviet State. But, seeing how the wish for friendship with the Soviet people was growing among the British people, the Labour leaders ... had begun to show their alarm and to hurry on measures designed to weaken friendly relations between the British people and the peoples of the USSR."

It is hardly surprising that British ruling circles, together with those in the USA who thought like them, should in their desire to break up a great alliance have tried to lay the responsibility for the break-up upon the USSR.

Accusations were made against the Soviet Union that it, allegedly, contrary to the agreements signed in Yalta regarding the furthering of the establishment of democratic governments in the liberated countries, had supported the inclusion in those governments of Communists.

In fact the actions of the Soviet Government had been in strict accord with the Yalta documents. When the corresponding formulation was included in those documents, it had been intended to cover all democratic forces, and Communists foremost of all, since it was a Communist state, the USSR, which had borne the brunt of the war against fascism, and within the occupied countries it had been Communists who were the most militant element within the Resistance movement.

For the British and American Governments Communists were democrats and allies only as long as they were shedding their blood in the fight against the common foe. From the very day when victory was gained, Communists ceased to be considered democrats in London and Washington, and maximum effort was directed towards preventing them from taking part in deciding their own countries' fate.

The Soviet Union, adhering strictly to the letter and the spirit of the wartime agreements between the allies, supported the true forces of democracy in the liberated countries and refused to assist the efforts made by the British and American Governments to strangle those forces, that is it did its utmost to thwart the export of counterrevolution by British and American imperialism. The Soviet Union fulfilled its revolutionary internationalist duty towards the peoples of Eastern and Central Europe, and that is what the British and American anti-communists cannot forgive.

The Conservatives and their allies from among the right-wing Labourites tried to justify hostility to the USSR by alleging that the latter represented a terrible military threat to the West. In making such allegations the enemies of the Soviet Union carefully said nothing of the fact that throughout its whole history, including this post-war period, the Soviet Union had systematically proposed to the West, including Britain, that their mutual relations should be based upon the principles of peaceful coexistence of states with differing social systems. Many Western bourgeois historians who have studied post-war international relations have compared the oft-repeated declarations by the Soviet Government of its desire for peaceful coexistence with its actual deeds of foreign policy, and have come to the conclusion that the declarations reflected the true desires of the Soviet Union.

The mainspring of London's anti-Soviet line was blind hatred of communism, a trait common to the Conservatives and to the right-wing Labour leaders then in power. Eden declared: "I hate Communism... But it is not enough to say that... We have to recognise that those who hold the creed hold it with a fervour that is almost a religion. If we are to defeat them we must therefore believe just as fervently in our faith and in ourselves."

Eden said on many occasions that capitalism must oppose communism by an ideology no less forceful, but as we know the wish to do so has today too remained a wish only, impossible of fulfilment for those who think like him. The Conservative think-tank producing the "new image" of the party confined itself to recommendations of a pragmatic nature. Tory No. 1, Winston Churchill, also failed to cover himself with glory as creator of a new ideology for British imperialism. "If you think," he said to Moran, "I have an alternative scheme of life, I have none." It would

be unfair to blame only Eden and Churchill for this. Throughout the entire bourgeois world moans may be heard on the need to work out an ideology which would meet contemporary conditions and be stronger than communist ideology. But fruitless moaning is as far as they get.

The Conservative position in foreign policy during the party's period in Opposition, and afterwards too, was determined not solely by the contradiction between socialism and capitalism but also by the contradictions with Britain's allies in the anti-communist front. Eden in particular, like every British imperialist, remained a convinced partisan of Britain's status as a Great Power, even under the unfavourable conditions, for that position, of the period following the Second World War. He was not averse to calculations aimed at restoring Britain's former role in the world, although in the forties few could see this as a realistic aim.

In October 1948 Eden spoke at the Conservative Party's annual conference on a draft foreign policy resolution, and according to his biographer Campbell-Johnson he there formulated "a clear and distinct doctrine which captured the imagination of the delegates, and later of the country. He himself laid great stress on this doctrine—he was to revert to it during the 1950 General Election campaign—which he christened the doctrine of the Three Unities." According to Eden, British foreign policy should be based on the "unity between the Commonwealth and Empire, without which no successful foreign policy could be pursued by this country. Next came unity with Western Europe... The third unity was that... with the United States." Eden stressed that "these three unities were not disparate, not incompatible, but complementary".

Campbell-Johnson and others emphasise the originality and great significance of this concept, as if unaware that at the same conference Churchill also spoke and outlined something very like Eden's formula, though less vague. Churchill developed the concept of three great spheres. The first sphere was the British Commonwealth and Empire; the second was the English-speaking nations, among which a great part was played by Britain; and the third sphere was a united Europe. Churchill said that Britain was the only country which played a great part in each of these spheres. Churchill's scheme is franker than Eden's; it makes no secret of the idea that the key to world affairs must be in

Britain's hands. Churchill's concept (and Eden's similar structure) was therefore directly at variance with the plans for world domination being cherished by American imperialist politicians.

Churchill set about realising his Fulton plans and the above-mentioned scheme with an energy typical of his nature. That is the explanation of his energetic espousal of the movement for a "united Europe". He was the originator of the movement in Britain, and took an active part in various bodies, official and voluntary, which were working for it on the Continent. Many eminent colleagues of his—Lord Woolton, Maxwell Fyfe, etc.—also participated in this movement for a "united Europe".

It is interesting that Eden, whom one might have expected to be in the forefront of such a campaign, did his best to keep in the background. "I never understood why Anthony Eden stood aloof," writes Macmillan. "It may well be that Churchill shrank from trying to commit too specifically a friend and a colleague who must, in the event of a Conservative Government returning to power, become either Foreign Secretary or, in the event of Churchill's death or illness, Prime Minister. It may be that Eden felt himself unable, with his long experience at the Foreign Office, to share his leader's enthusiasm."

In spite of the propaganda camouflage, the imperialist nature of British foreign policy was fairly obvious. Among the masses of the people concern grew as to where that policy would lead. The deterioration of relations with the Soviet Union brought about by Britain and her NATO allies, and the armaments race, evoked popular fears of another world war. In personal conversation Churchill said of the Labour Government: "They are going to have a war with Russia." Many British people thought the same.

Labour policies in economic and home affairs also aroused growing dissatisfaction. The Attlee-Bevin Government first made a number of major concessions to the working people and then, starting with 1948, proceeded to nullify these by various roundabout measures.

The Labour leadership sensed the change in the political climate and began to worry about the result of the next election. As mid-1950 was to see a great increase in arms expenditure, which was sure to evoke popular protest, the Labour leaders decided to call a General Election on February 23, 1950.

The Conservatives went into the election campaign with a radically re-organised party machine and with a number of attractive programme documents, also with the advantage of popular discontent with the Labour Government to exploit. The Labour election manifesto was exceedingly vague.

The result of the election was: Labour—315 seats, Conservatives—297. What had been an overwhelming Labour majority was now down to danger point. The Parliamentary balance was very fine, and it was therefore expected that there would have to be another election before long. At the state opening of Parliament Attlee declared that "the King's Government must be carried on". But many were asking—for how long?

Eden, as had already become a tradition, campaigned with calm confidence, and was returned as a Member of the House of Commons with an impressive majority of 9 thousand votes over his Labour opponent.

After the election the Labour Government had accepted a three-year re-armament programme imposed on Britain by virtue of her membership of NATO; this was itself later stepped up, and was to cost the country £4,700 million. As a result taxation went up, the people's living standards went down, and there were cuts in the amounts of money allocated to housing, social services, health and education. As was only to be expected, dissatisfaction with the Labour Government grew stronger. There was a split in the party leadership, a number of Ministers resigned in protest against the measures being pushed through.

The government was obliged to call a fresh General Election, for October 25, 1951. This time there was even less difference than before between the programmes of the two parties. The Conservatives were very worried, though, that the masses of the people saw them as a party of warmongers. This was a natural reaction to Churchill's Fulton speech and to his other similar utterances. Macmillan admits that many people voted against the Conservatives as a result of "the bitter onslaught against Churchill on the 'warmongering' issue". The question of peace was thus the principal issue in the election campaign. Neither of the main parties could justifiably lay claim to being a champion of the peace policy. In any case, the election brought defeat for Labour: they got 295 seats in the House of Commons, whereas the Conservatives got 321. Eden was, as usual, re-elected at the polls in his electoral district.

Newspapers such as the *Yorkshire Post* took a rosy view of his future. By the time he was fifty, they wrote, Eden had already clocked up quarter of a century's experience of Parliament, and attained a high peak of his political achievement. And the years in Opposition might prove to be the decisive formative period leading him on from the Foreign Office to Downing Street. This was an opinion shared by many in the Conservative Party. They believed that Eden would soon take Churchill's place.

The question of Eden's next destination—the Foreign Office, or Downing Street?—was now on the practical agenda. It was not a simple question. It has to be the leader of the victorious party in an election who forms the next government. That is the rule. But Churchill was now 77 years old. And the post of Prime Minister in a country such as Britain demands an immense amount of energy. At this point in time Lord Moran wrote: "I doubt whether he is up to the job." Apart from anything else, he was becoming increasingly deaf. Of course Churchill's physical ills were kept out of the public eye, but it was impossible to conceal them altogether, especially from people in close contact with him. So in the upper reaches of the Conservative Party more and more voices were to be heard, particularly those belonging to younger men, saying that it was time for the old man to go.

Churchill knew it. But when Moran mentioned that there were many who wanted him to retire, he replied confidently: "But they need my name." And this was true.

So, as Churchill was not immediately threatened with deposition, he decided the question of whether or not he should be Prime Minister for himself. He did have doubts, and quite strong ones, but in the end these were overcome by his limitless vanity and thirst for power, still powerfully moving him even as his eightieth birthday approached. Moran described his patient's state of mind thus: "When the struggle for power is at an end and his political life is over, Winston will feel that there is no purpose in his existence."

The final decision was taken early in October. On October 4 Brendan Bracken, a man very close to Churchill, told Macmillan: "Churchill intends to stay a year or 18 months as P.M. (not more) in the event of a victory at the polls... Eden will go to the Foreign Office; Butler to the Exchequer." Churchill thus put Butler third in the hierarchy of party and government.

On October 28, 1951, Churchill invited Macmillan to his country home at Chartwell and offered him the post of Minister of Housing. Macmillan says that he was taken aback by this proposal. "What an assignment!... I knew nothing whatever about the housing problem except that we had pledged ourselves to an enormously high figure, generally regarded by the experts as unattainable." Macmillan asked the advice of his wife, who had gone with him, advice "which from a long experience I knew to be generally sound. She was in no doubt at all that I ought to accept."

Eden in his Memoirs remains completely silent on the problems of forming a Conservative Government in autumn 1951, confining himself to the statement that "at Mr. Churchill's invitation I became Foreign Secretary once again and had to translate my convictions into action without delay".

There were plenty of foreign affairs problems on hand for the British Government. Work had to be continued in the military and political blocs already brought into being; ways and means had to be found for re-militarising West Germany (this issue had already been decided in principle); there was the cold war with the Soviet Union to be kept going (it had got off to a running start under Eden's predecessors).

The new Foreign Secretary made no basic changes in the foreign policy line being pursued. He merely continued and developed what had already been begun, and this is a much easier task than making sharp changes of course. Britain's claims to a leading role, in the affairs of Europe at least, had also been staked out already; Eden had only to uphold them. Macmillan remarks that "the next three years, from 1951 to 1954, were to prove a period of baffling and complicated diplomacy, in which the British Government was naturally expected to play a leading role". British politicians found it impossible to shed their accustomed desire to be in "a leading role" always and everywhere, although their power to do so was now insufficient, and circumstances were hardly favourable.

On returning to the Foreign Office, Eden at once undertook a series of visits to the capitals of Western European countries, and to the United States. He needed to re-establish his contacts with heads of state, which had remained "frozen" since 1945, to sort out on the spot what the situa-

tion was in the various countries, so as to be able to order his relations with them accordingly. Of course it was pleasant to feel that one was in harness again, to see one's own picture, and one's own name in large type, on the front pages of the papers. Eden readily put in appearances before the television cameras. He was photogenic, so his speeches on T.V. seemed more impressive than those in Parliament.

At the very beginning of 1952 Churchill and Eden together sailed on the *Queen Mary* to the USA. They were accompanied by a large suite of advisers both civilian and military, including the chiefs of staff of the three arms branches. The delegation in fact was staffed like those of the war days, attending meetings of the Big Three. But times had changed, the balance of power was now quite definite, and in Washington they did not take too much account of the British.

After the talks were over Eden travelled to New York, where he received the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws from Columbia University. As tradition prescribed on such occasions, the guest made a speech on international relations. It was something in the nature of a manifesto formulating Eden's views and those of his government. Eden referred to the sadly defunct League of Nations, spoke of his fidelity to its ideals, and called for moral and ideological unity of the Western world, for, as he put it, "the enemy stands at the gate ready to take advantage of our discords". And who was this enemy of the human race and of bourgeois civilisation? "The bitter doctrine of Communist Imperialism."

Eden went on to expound what communism was as he understood it. This was an Eden-style variation on Churchill's Fulton speech. The British Foreign Secretary once again showed himself to be a determined enemy of communism and of the USSR. He called on the Americans and his own fellow-countrymen to create a force capable of compelling the Soviet Union to bow to Anglo-American diktat.

In 1952 important changes occurred in Eden's private life. In March his son Nicholas left Oxford, without receiving a degree. Study did not suit the younger Eden, he was uninterested and did badly, and so decided to give it up. His father arranged for him to be given a post which was both prominent and full of promise for the future. Aide-de-camp to the Governor-General of Canada.

And on August 12 a news item appeared which attracted

close attention in some sections of society in Britain and the USA. It announced that Eden was marrying again. His bride-to-be was Clarissa Churchill, niece of the Prime Minister, the daughter of his late brother John Churchill. Her ancestry on the father's side thus went back to the Dukes of Marlborough, and on the mother's to the Earls of Abingdon. She was then 32 years old, 23 years younger than her fiancé.

Clarissa Churchill had graduated from Oxford in 1938, where she had studied philosophy. She was then presented at Court. She studied at a school of art, and was photographed a good deal for fashion magazines. In the war years she worked in the Ministry of Information. Her duties there included preparation for the press of the weekly *Britansky Soyuznik* (*British Ally*), which was brought out in Russian and distributed in the USSR through the British Embassy, under a war-time agreement between the British and Soviet Governments. Later on she worked in the Foreign Office, as a cipher clerk and on other clerical work.

To quote Bardens, "Clarissa Churchill was wholly unknown outside her own special circle of aristocrats, academics..." She tried her hand at literary work, writing about the ballet, theatre and the arts for *Vogue*. It has been said that these pieces showed "a perceptive mind and cultivated tastes", but that "writing" did not come "easily to her". Also that there was "no doubt that her social status counted a good deal in the magazines which printed her work". At one time she worked on publicity for Alexander Korda's films, acting as liaison officer between Korda and American magazines. Then she worked for the magazine *Contact*. Aristocratic connections and close blood relationship to the Prime Minister gave her access to all the eminent persons of Britain. That was probably what made her valuable as a journalist and publicity worker.

Clarissa had a flat in London where she could do her own entertaining, and a pleasant country cottage for weekends. It was said that she knew many people, but had few friends. Among those who were close to her were Greta Garbo, the photographer Cecil Beaton (who liked consorting with the aristocracy), Eden's private secretary, Nicholas Lawford, and the former Cabinet Minister Duff Cooper.

Clarissa met Eden at the country homes of Winston Churchill and of the Duchess of Kent. They had much in common: their aristocratic origins, their closeness to Winston

Churchill, a love of golf, tennis, swimming, gardening, and a taste for art and for travel. On theatre, though, their tastes differed. Eden liked light pieces, shows at which one could relax. Clarissa preferred Ibsen and Shakespeare.

As soon as the engagement announcement appeared, congratulations poured in. One of the first to send a congratulatory telegram was son Nicholas.

The day before the wedding, Clarissa moved to her uncle Winston's, to Downing Street. The civil registration of the marriage was a markedly simple ceremony, taking 18 minutes in all, and in complete contrast to the expensive "great occasion" which Eden's first wedding had been. First witness to the marriage was Winston Churchill; also present were his wife Clementine, his son Randolph, his two married daughters and their husbands, and a few more friends and relations of both Eden and Clarissa. In the street outside there was of course a crowd waiting to see the happy pair (some say there were as many as 2,000), so the mounted police were also in attendance.

After the ceremony there was a reception at 10 Downing Street. Photographs of the couple taken then, in the garden of No. 10, appear without fail in illustrated biographies of Eden.

Tradition prescribes a honeymoon trip after a wedding. And tradition was observed. For the first day of married life, the couple were the guests of the millionaire Witney Straight, whose house was near London Airport. Next day they flew to Lisbon. Here there was an incident which has been told and re-told by the biographers as if it was of historic importance. Eden flew into a rage when he discovered that the hotel in which they had reserved their accommodation had no swimming pool. The couple left ostentatiously, and spent their honeymoon (actually only one week) in a distant part of Portugal, at a picturesque spa.

In the following year Eden was taken seriously ill. The doctors advanced differing diagnoses. At the end of March 1953 Eden's state was so bad that his medical advisers and family insisted that he must undergo tests immediately, in spite of the fact that he was supposed to be making an official visit to Turkey very shortly. X-ray examination showed stones in the gall-bladder, and the doctors advised immediate surgery. The trip to Turkey was cancelled, and some others also; for Eden this was the beginning of a time

of severe physical suffering and a stubborn fight for life.

On April 9 he was operated on in a London hospital, and his gall-bladder removed, but recovery failed to follow. He had a persistent high temperature and grew increasingly weaker, and there was a recurrence of the jaundice he had suffered from the previous summer. The doctors decided on a second operation, which was performed on April 29, but even after this the patient did not improve.

Shortly after this a famous American surgeon called Cattell, a great specialist on affections of the gall-bladder, arrived in London to deliver lectures. Clarissa arranged for him to examine her husband. Afterwards five medical men, including the surgeon who had operated on Eden, issued a bulletin stating that after operation the main gall duct had remained open and that further surgical intervention was necessary. Cattell declared that Eden would never recover unless a third operation was made. He volunteered to perform it, and was certain of its success, but only on condition that Eden was transferred to Boston (US), where there were special facilities not available in Britain. Eden decided to have the operation in America. It was successful, and he began slowly to recover.

After the operation he spent some time resting at the house of an American friend, on the Atlantic coast. As he rested and gradually regained his strength, Eden read a great deal and went for walks in the fresh air. He became fully fit again only after another holiday, on the French Riviera, where he stayed with his son in a villa belonging to Lord Warwick. Then he went for a cruise around the Mediterranean by yacht, visiting Greece and Crete. On October 5 he returned to work, bronzed and completely fit again.

At this period Eden's main attention was concentrated on the confrontation with the Soviet Union and other socialist states in Europe. Britain had no intention of conducting a struggle with the USSR on its own. Even while the war was still on, Churchill and Eden had been concocting plans for a united imperialist front in Europe. In 1946 Churchill, developing these plans further, had proposed in a speech made in Zurich the creation of "a kind of United States of Europe". The 1947 Dunkirk Treaty, between Britain and France, and the pact under which a Western Union was formed (it included Britain, France and the Benelux countries), were steps towards realising those plans. In 1949

the British Conservatives gave their most energetic support to a conference of European statesmen at the Hague, at which the Council of Europe was set up. At the same time, a Consultative Assembly was established at Strasbourg, for the discussion of problems of European unity, as well as a Council of Ministers.

Even these early days saw the introduction of a misleading terminology. The creators of these so-called European communities made a great noise about "uniting Europe". In fact the opposite was the case—this was a division of Europe, with imperialist Western Europe being opposed to socialist Eastern Europe.

Eden's Memoirs make it clear that British ruling circles were "uniting Europe" against the USSR, also against the progressive movement in European countries. He says that in Europe after the war "the Russians stayed, almost at full strength" and that "in such conditions the absence of a German army ... was a critical weakness". So that weakness must be made good, i.e. a German army must be created, Germany re-militarised (all of Germany if possible, but at a pinch the zones under Western occupation would do) and used as a shock force against the USSR.

That was how British ruling circles thought. But the vast majority of the French people, having learned by the bitter experience of three wars what German militarism meant for French security, were against handing arms to the Germans six years after the end of the Second World War. "French opinion," writes Eden, "hated the idea of the rearmament of Germany." Re-militarisation caused anxiety not only among the French, but among other peoples too. Hence the search for ways of bypassing their objections, a search which produced the plan for creating a European Defence Community.

The so-called Pleven Plan appeared, under which the Federal Republic of Germany would have armed forces within the framework of a united European army. It was considered that this arrangement offered a sufficient guarantee that West Germany would not attack its neighbours and allies within the European Army. This plan was naturally greeted with rapture by Bonn. The FRG received arms after the Second World War much more quickly than the Weimar Republic had been able to do after the First. By autumn 1951 the Pleven Plan had been transformed into a plan for the creation of the European Defence Community,

and its main provisions had been agreed among the participating countries.

In the course of all this the British Government's double game was revealed. On August 11, 1950, Churchill had made a speech in the Consultative Assembly in Strasbourg in which he said: "We should make a gesture of practical and constructive guidance by declaring *ourselves in favour of the immediate creation of a European army under a unified command, and in which we should bear a worthy and honourable part* [my emphasis—V.T.]." Even without the innumerable analogous statements made by British representatives and by Churchill himself, this single speech would itself have been sufficient to make Britain's position absolutely clear: she was the leading initiator and was to be the chief participant in the European Army being created.

Such was the opinion of the European politicians involved, many of whom saw British participation as an additional guarantee of the loyal behaviour of re-militarised West Germany towards its allies; then all of a sudden it transpired that Britain was not intending to take a practical part in the European Defence Community and contribute units of its own to the European Army. Britain, while egging on the Western European countries to create this army and re-militarise the FRG, proposed to keep her own hands free.

In November 1951 a leading British Minister, M. Fyfe, made a statement in Strasbourg the text of which had been approved by the Cabinet. "I cannot promise full and unconditional participation [by Britain in the EDC]," he said. The same day at a press conference in Rome a few hours later, Eden announced Britain's wish to establish "the closest possible association at all stages of its development" with the European Defence Community.

The journalists were quick to seize on the difference between "participation" and "association", and put supplementary questions. Answering these, Eden explained that "the word 'association' did not imply that British units and formations would be part of the European Army, but that there might be some other form of association". This double-dealing and lack of good faith naturally caused great indignation among the governments of the Western European countries.

On December 1, in a minute to Churchill, Eden formulated the British position on this matter: "I have never thought it possible that we could join such an army... We should

support the Pleven Plan, though we cannot be members of it. This is what the Americans are doing."

The reference to the Americans reveals the springs of the British attitude. Officially, Eden and other Ministers explained that Britain could not bind herself more firmly to the EDC because she had traditional, historical links with the countries of the Commonwealth which precluded this.

Certainly the British economy, and British political life, was and still is dependent on links with the Commonwealth countries. But, firstly, these links were being rapidly transformed, so that Britain could despite them have taken part in the EDC, on the same basis as, say, France. For France, too, had a "Commonwealth" of her own, which emerged on the ruins of her colonial empire, and was bound to it by the same kind of links as Britain to hers. Secondly, as we know, when Britain decided six or seven years later that she wanted to be closely integrated with Europe (i.e. made her request to join the Common Market), imperial links did not stop her doing so. Thirdly and finally, when Churchill and other government Ministers had spoken in the early fifties of a European Defence Community with Britain taking part they can scarcely have forgotten about Britain's imperial role, and must consequently have considered that the two things were not incompatible.

Probably the main reason for the change in British policy regarding the EDC was the British desire to do as "the Americans were doing", i.e. to make sure that they had control of the projected military grouping, and to play upon the contradictions between its members, chiefly those between France and Germany, in order to guide its policies and strategy in their own interests.

Just why was the British Government first ready to take part in the EDC on the same basis as others, and then changed its position? What was this—a mistake, later corrected? By no means. The politicians of London considered to begin with, and quite rightly, that if they started organising others while stating that they were not themselves going to be "organised", on account of their special interests and their special role in the world and in Europe, then other countries would not commit themselves to the military and political grouping envisaged. But once the preparatory work had reached an advanced stage, it was decided in London that it was now safe to jump off the wagon, it would car-

ry on rolling of its own accord. A crafty and perfidious proceeding? Yes. But Britain's associates should have been used to such by now.

Within the British Government there were differences of opinion respecting the British line towards the EDC: Macmillan, Maxwell Fyfe and some other Ministers held that Britain should join the Community. Otherwise, Macmillan wrote, "there would be a European Community, from which we should be excluded, and which would effectively control Europe... Germany was weak now; in the long run she would be stronger than France, and so we might be bringing about in twenty years' time that domination of Europe by Germany to prevent which we had made such terrible sacrifices twice within a single generation". More than once in his Memoirs Macmillan makes remarks like "I feared that if the Defence Community came into being without us, there would ultimately be a Europe dominated by Germany". For Macmillan and those who thought like him the question came down to this: how could they prevent German domination of Europe and seize the leading role in European affairs for themselves.

For those who took the opposite point of view—Eden, Churchill, and most of the Cabinet Ministers—that was the vital point too. But they considered that the British Government could achieve its aims better while remaining outside the Community. The struggle against the USSR coloured their position very strongly. For this group within the Cabinet, notes Macmillan, "the only vital thing was the early organisation of the forces in NATO, including a German contribution", against the USSR.

Eden's line carried the day easily, and he busied himself with persuading the French Government to cast aside the doubts besetting it and agree to the creation of the EDC. The Foreign Office produced a series of proposals designed to tempt the French. It was suggested that there would be an Anglo-American declaration that those countries would support France were she threatened by the re-militarised Germany; a treaty was suggested between Britain and the Community which would embody a similar obligation, and various other guarantees. But still the French hesitated. Hearing all these promises, they clearly recollected the similar guarantees which Britain had given France in the twenties and thirties, and what they had led to.

Eventually agreement was reached, and on May 26, 1952, a treaty was signed in Bonn by Britain, the USA, France and the FRG on relations between the three powers and the FRG, providing for participation by West Germany in the European Defence Community and in the European Army, an ending of the occupation statute, and full control by West Germany of its internal affairs and its foreign policy. The next day a treaty was signed in Paris by the governments of the FRG, France, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxemburg, providing for the formation of the European Defence Community.

Two diametrically opposed lines of policy regarding the German question and its solution were thus emerging before the eyes of the world. Whereas the Soviet Union was working for the re-unification of Germany on a peaceful, democratic basis and for the conclusion of a peace treaty with her, the Western powers aimed at putting arms in the hands of the German revanchists, and using the latter in confrontation with the socialist countries.

The USSR firmly opposed the re-militarisation of the FRG, insisting that a peace treaty should be signed with Germany, to be followed later by the withdrawal of the occupation forces from the country. On March 11, 1952, the Soviet Government presented its draft of the principles of a peace treaty with Germany for consideration by the governments of Britain, France and the USA. This draft envisaged the restoration of Germany as a single, independent, peaceful and democratic state. The Soviet proposals provided for "the elimination of the possibility of a resurgence of German militarism and aggression". This was in the interests not of the Soviet Union alone, but of France, and of Germany's other neighbours, and of Britain too, looking at the matter from the standpoint of her basic, vital interests.

After the Bonn treaty had been signed the Soviet Government took cognisance of the new situation thus created, i.e. that there was now a formal military alliance between Britain, the USA, France and the FRG, and proposed to the Western powers that there should be a Four-Power Conference to discuss a peace treaty with Germany and the formation of an interim all-German government. "Russia," we read in Macmillan's Memoirs, "during the spring of 1952 began to put forward proposals for a meeting to discuss the question of German reunification. Eden played

off this intervention with considerable skill by immediately raising the question of a United Nations Commission to arrange the conditions of German elections." The object of Eden's "skill" was clear to the Soviet Government: he was proposing that the elections should be organised in such a way as to produce a restoration of capitalism in the GDR and bring a re-united Germany into the imperialist military blocs. Such "skill" was naturally not to the taste of either the USSR or the GDR.

At the same time Eden emphasised his readiness to hold talks with the USSR. Talks for what purpose? Not that of seeking mutually agreeable settlement of the German question, oh no. Eden himself writes that when he met the French Foreign Minister, "Schuman and I discussed the possible reactions of the Soviet Union to ... the E.D.C. treaty. We agreed that, while persisting with our plans, we would make every effort to draw the Russians into declaring their intentions for Europe. We should make it clear that we were always ready to talk."

Here we have a method frequently employed by British diplomacy. It presses on, quietly, with the furtherance of its own imperialist aims, but by way of camouflage it engages at the same time in talks dealing with quite different propositions.

In Britain, and in many other countries, protests against the plans to re-militarise Germany were very strong. It was a broad movement, influencing many Members of Parliament. It was in order to quell this movement that the British Government demonstratively indicated its readiness to hold talks with the Soviet Union on the German question.

Of course talks of such a kind could not be successful. And whenever the latest round of talks came to an end, the British Government would attribute its lack of success to the Soviet Union's "inflexibility". It was double-dealing diplomacy, diplomacy of deception and misinformation of both the British people and world public opinion.

In cases where diplomacy of this sort is engaged in, the commentator or historian is faced with an important question: to what extent should one give credence to the declarations of British diplomats and politicians, or to Foreign Office documents relating to such talks? Readers will hardly need prompting to find the answer to that.

After the Bonn and Paris treaties had been signed, a

struggle to get them ratified began, and it went on for two years. It was at just this juncture that Lord Salisbury (during Eden's absence through illness) went to Washington to discuss a number of problems, including that of the EDC. Churchill briefed him beforehand, saying: "I believe E.D.C. would have made the French less troublesome and Soviet Russia more disposed to work with me... If we'd got E.D.C., then we could have spoken to Russia from strength, because German rearmament is the only thing they are afraid of. I want to use Germany and E.D.C. to keep Russia in the mood to be reasonable—to make her play. And I would use Russia to prevent Germany getting out of hand." "It sounds cynical," Churchill concludes. One can only agree with him. There you have it, British foreign policy and diplomacy plain and unadorned. That is the kind of documentary evidence that does inspire belief.

In March 1953 the British and US Governments were given unexpected hope that their all-out pressure upon the Soviet Union might at last yield the results which London and Washington were wanting. J. V. Stalin died. Early in March Eden and Butler had set out for New York by sea, and they learned the news as they were coming into New York harbour. On the quayside a crowd of journalists was waiting for Eden. They all wanted to know what effect the death of Stalin would have on international relations. Whatever Eden's opinions on the subject may have been, he kept them to himself. But even though the British Foreign Secretary did not answer the question, parrying it with general phrases, he must nevertheless have asked himself the same question many, many times.

During the war years Eden had made a considerable contribution to building up and keeping in being the anti-Hitler coalition and the military and political alliance with the USSR. He had maintained regular contact with both the Soviet and the American Ambassador in London, he had repeatedly visited Moscow and Washington either on his own or accompanying Churchill, he had taken part in all the high-level conferences between the USSR, Britain and the USA. On more than one occasion he had been responsible for negotiations on important issues with Stalin and Roosevelt.

A quarter of a century later, in 1967, in an interview with a journalist called Alden Whitman, Eden saw fit to give

his personal opinion on the leaders of the USSR and the USA.*

Recalling the war years, Eden told Whitman that he considered Stalin "the ablest negotiator I have ever seen in action". "He had a very clear sense of purpose," said Eden. "He was never violent in speech ... but quiet and insisted on the things that mattered to him."

Oddly enough, Eden is more critical of Roosevelt as a man than he is of Stalin. "Roosevelt was familiar with the history and geography of Europe," he noted. "Perhaps his hobby of stamp collection had helped him to this knowledge but the ... opinions which he built upon it were alarming in their cheerful fecklessness. He seemed to see himself disposing of the fate of many lands, Allied no less than enemy. He did all this with so much grace that it was not easy to dissent."

Whatever dimly seen possibilities began to stir in Eden's mind at Stalin's death, it is evident that he made too much of the personal element in foreign policy, and in general of the role of the individual in history. It is a failing common among many Western politicians.

Now that Stalin was no longer alive, the leaders of the Western world felt it was an appropriate moment to mount a fresh political attack upon the Soviet Union. The previously agreed programme for the British Ministers' visit to the US had given Eden a meeting with President Eisenhower in a few days' time. But when they landed in New York on March 4, Eden flew to Washington immediately and took part, as his biographer Broad tells us, "in a hastily convoked meeting at the White House the same night". In the course of this meeting Eden, General Eisenhower and the recently appointed Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, "exchanged views on Russia's future".

"After Stalin's death would the Soviets be inclined to show less animus against the West? That was the question in all minds," writes Broad. "Less animus", of course, meant greater Soviet readiness to make concessions. At a press luncheon, the following day, Eden "touched upon it not

* Eden had made it a condition of the interview, dealing as it did with many of the most important issues of his career, that it should not be published until after his own death. Whitman kept to his agreement, and published the interview only after ten years had passed, on January 15, 1977, in *The New York Times*, as a kind of obituary of Eden.

unhopefully". "The Western powers," he said, "must be ready to negotiate with Russia to end the division of the world into two armed camps... I think there is only one attitude to take—to build our strength and adapt ourselves to things which might happen."

When the talks in Washington were concluded, a joint communique was issued stating that the Ministers had exchanged views on "developments in the Soviet Union".

The Ministers had agreed to continue building up NATO's military strength, and to employ the threat of its use to try and oblige the USSR to make major concessions. Churchill was suddenly fired with the idea of holding a new Summit meeting, to include the USSR, being convinced that no one could do better than he at foisting off on the Soviet Government such solutions to the principal international problems as would be advantageous to the West.

In the spirit of a unified Anglo-American approach to relations with the USSR, President Eisenhower addressed to the Soviet Government, on April 16, a demand that it should give tangible evidence of a desire for peace. "We care only," he said, "for sincerity of peaceful purpose, attested by deeds. The opportunities for such deeds are many." These "deeds" were to be concessions on key international issues. It was unilateral concessions that were being demanded of the USSR, not compromise (with concessions made on both sides), equal, mutually advantageous agreement.

It can be readily understood that that kind of language was not appropriate for constructive discussion with the USSR either prior to 1953 or after that.

The leaders of Britain and the USA were soon convinced of this. In 1959, recalling the spring of 1953, Eden wrote: "Although the death of Stalin brought some modification in the technique of Moscow's foreign policy, its real character was not changed." He might have reached the same conclusion in 1953, if he had understood that the foreign policy of a government is determined by the social structure of the state, and by the interests of the classes in power, and that it therefore remains constant in principle, so long as there are no changes in those spheres. Of course the individuals in leading state positions leave their own imprint, to a certain extent, on this or that diplomatic act, but they cannot change the aims and fundamental principles of foreign policy. The foreign policy line of the CPSU has

been constantly determined, throughout the entire existence of the Soviet state, by Lenin's principles for socialist foreign policy—the principle of proletarian internationalism, and the principle of the peaceful coexistence of states with differing social systems.

Throughout 1953 and 1954, the British Government was kept hard at it to try and get the agreements on the creation of the E.D.C. ratified. Eden had endless talks with de Gaulle's Ministers. Simultaneously, Churchill made public speeches containing threats towards France if she should not ratify the E.D.C. agreement. One of these threats was that the British Government might go for a normalisation of relations with the USSR. On May 11, 1953, Churchill made a speech mentioning the possibility of agreement of some kind being reached with the USSR. This speech is a good example, incidentally, of how "flexible" the British politicians can be: they were knocking together the E.D.C., intimidating the countries of Western Europe with the "Soviet threat", but should need arise they were quite ready to use the reverse threat, that they might themselves reach agreement with the USSR.

But this declaration had an effect the exact reverse of that intended by London. On August 30, 1954, the French Chamber of Deputies rejected the agreement on the creation of a European Defence Community. This was a major defeat for the British Cabinet's European policy. But for Eden personally, the blow was softened by the success which had attended the Geneva Conference (summer 1954), in which he himself took part, on problems of the Far East and South-East Asia.

In January 1950 Britain had established diplomatic relations (on a very limited scale) with the newly formed People's Republic of China. This was far from meaning that British imperialism had resigned itself to the immense changes taking place in Asia and the Far East. Britain and the USA maintained a bitter struggle against the socialist and national liberation revolutions which were proceeding in those areas. When in 1950 the USA committed aggression against the Korean People's Democratic Republic, Britain became its most active ally, sending a Commonwealth division to fight in Korea. It was a fierce war, and Britain shares in the responsibility for it. At the time when Eden returned to the Foreign Office, the forces of imperialism had already lost that war, but the search dragged on

at the negotiating tables for a formula which would enable the United States to withdraw without "losing face". One obstacle to reaching agreement on an armistice was the question of exchanging prisoners of war. Eden advanced a proposal that a start should be made by exchanging, first, the sick and wounded. This was acted upon. Some consider that this was a characteristic trait of Eden's diplomatic tactics: if talks on grave issues had reached deadlock, he would try to get agreement on some particular, minor point of the matters under discussion. Of course the Korean armistice agreement, signed on July 27, 1953, cannot be put down to Eden's credit, it was a major victory of the peace forces, and evidence of the success attending the efforts of the USSR and other socialist countries to achieve relaxation of international tension.

After Korea, the most dangerous area of tension was Indochina, where the flames of war were spreading ever wider. In 1945, at the end of the Second World War, Britain had landed her troops in Indochina to preserve "order" until the French colonial administration would come back. Every conceivable effort was made by London to prevent the national liberation movement triumphing in Indochina, for close by, as it were next door, there were major British colonies of the utmost value, which might find the example of Indochina infectious. Consequently, when the Democratic Republic of Vietnam was proclaimed, headed by President Ho Chi Minh, and the armed struggle of the Vietnamese people against the French colonialists began, not only the sympathies but the moral and political support of the British Government were on the side of the colonialists.

After the defeat of the American intervention in Korea, the correlation of forces in Indochina began to shift rapidly in favour of the national liberation movement. Two years later, the French Government began addressing urgent requests for aid to the USA and Britain. The French complained that they could not carry on the fight for "the interests of the free world" in Indochina single-handed, when at the same time they were being told "to make the contribution to European defence".

The British Government feared that any military aid given to the French in Indochina by Britain and the US would automatically bring the People's Republic of China into the conflict, on the side of the Democratic Republic of

Vietnam. Hence Eden's warning to US Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, in 1952, that "Her Majesty's Government were strongly opposed to any course of action in South-East Asia which would be likely to result in a war with China". It was a realistic view of the matter. It was based on a just appreciation of the USA's defeat in its fight against the Chinese revolution, the defeat of the USA, Britain and other countries in the Korean war, the ejection of British colonialism from India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon, and France's evident debacle in Indochina.

As for the French attempt to link the situation in South-East Asia with that in Europe, Eden set that firmly aside. He told Plevin, the French Minister of Defence, that he had every sympathy with the French position, but the French argument that Indochina made it impossible for France to build up any army in Europe would not carry conviction in the United Kingdom. British opinion would be more impressed when France increased her National Service to two years as Britain had done, and called up her reserves for training.

Stating your arguments is one thing, but in London they were seriously concerned that the situation in Indochina might wreck the setting up of the European Defence Community. As Eden wrote later: "The fate of the E.D.C. was in part dependent upon its [i.e. the Indochinese problem's] solution. As Sir Oliver Harvey [British Ambassador in Paris—V.T.] reported at the time, Indochina had become the key to European problems."

In 1954 the British Government's position vis-à-vis the war in Indochina was essentially this: Britain was anxious to assist in the defence of colonial positions in that area both immediately and in the future; she considered it possible and indeed indispensable to wage armed struggle against the national liberation movement under way there, but so as not to provoke a major war; she considered it essential to bring the war to a conclusion as rapidly as possible, so that it should not act as a hindrance to realisation of the plans for the E.D.C.

Eden therefore supported the Soviet proposal made at the Berlin Conference of Foreign Ministers of the USSR, Britain, the USA and France, that a similar conference should be convened in which representatives of the People's Republic of China and of some other states should also take part, to discuss the restoration of peace in Indo-

china. It was agreed that this conference should take place in Geneva, starting on April 26, 1954.

This decision was taken largely in spite of objections raised by Dulles. It was a rare event for the British Foreign Secretary to disagree publicly with the American Secretary of State. Dulles was a tough and obstinate man, especially when the struggle against socialist revolution was involved, and he refused to let the Berlin decision put him off. American ruling circles had been infuriated by the US defeat in China and in Korea, and were thirsting to get their revanche in Indochina. There were other motives also: victory of the democratic forces in Indochina would have been a serious blow to the positions of American imperialism in the area.

The American Government made an attempt to organise in quick time a collective intervention in Indochina which would, firstly, help the French to maintain their positions in the struggle against the national liberation movement, and secondly, wreck the forthcoming Geneva Conference.

To tempt the wavering Eden and Churchill, Dulles said that those taking part in this "collective action" would form the nucleus of an organisation for struggling against the revolutionary and national liberation movement in South-East Asia. This proposal soon took real shape, when SEATO was formed.

The British Ministers were taken to the idea of a Far Eastern version of NATO—an organisation which would stand guard over British imperialist interests in the region. Its creation would also go some way towards neutralising the bitter feeling of humiliation the British Government had undergone when in 1951 the USA, Australia and New Zealand had organised an imperialist bloc and had unceremoniously excluded Britain.

On March 29, 1954, in a speech to the Press Club, Dulles said that the spread of communism to South-East Asia "should not be passively accepted but should be met by united action". Eden realised at once that the American Government was preparing to take an action similar to the one in Korea. On April 1 he sent a telegram to the British Ambassador in Washington saying that the British Government fully shared the US desire to see Indochina protected against communism, but did not consider that the time was yet ripe for a successful solution to the problem.

Meanwhile, the fight for Dien Bien Phu, a most important strategic point in Indochina, was going badly for the French; they were under threat of a defeat which would have far-reaching political consequences. Dulles therefore approached the British and French Governments with fresh proposals: all the countries concerned should make a solemn declaration of their readiness "to take concerted action ... against continued interference by China in the Indo-China war". The proposed declaration was to include the threat of naval and air action against the Chinese coast, and of active intervention in Indochina itself. This declaration was to be made jointly by the USA, France, Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, the Philippines, and three associated states of Indochina—Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. The same group of states should simultaneously organise a system of collective defence in South-East Asia.

Knowing British and French reservations on this matter, Eisenhower sent Churchill a personal message urging him to fall in with the American plan. Dulles was sent to London to discuss the plan. It was not possible to refuse to talk to Dulles, but Eden at once telegraphed his Ambassador in Washington warning him to be extremely cautious and say nothing that might be construed as British agreement to the American plan. "We were now faced with a decision of major importance," Eden says in his Memoirs.

In the briefing issued for the talks with Dulles, he warned: "The United States proposal assumes that the threat of retaliation against China would cause her to withdraw aid from the Vietminh. This seems to me a fundamental weakness... The joint warning to China would have no effect, and the coalition would then have to withdraw ignominiously or else embark on warlike action against China.

"Neither blockade nor the bombing of China's internal and external communications ... were considered by our Chiefs of Staff to be militarily effective... They would, however, give China every excuse for invoking the Sino-Soviet Treaty, and might lead to a world war." The Americans had not "weighed the consequences of this policy". In view of these circumstances, Britain could not "commit ... forces to operations in Indo-China", such was Eden's conclusion, and he went on to recommend that any action taken must be such as to be "acceptable to British (and French) public opinion". At the same time he had words of warm approval

for the idea of organising "collective security" in South-East Asia. The Cabinet approved this formulation by the Foreign Secretary of Britain's position.

On the very eve of his meeting with Dulles, thus, Eden was empowered to raise categorical objections to repeating the experience of Korea in Indochina; to give all possible support to plans for creating a military and political bloc in South-East Asia; and to ensure that the projected Geneva Conference did take place.

On April 11 Eden and Dulles dined together at the American Embassy and then had a thorough discussion of the Indochina problem. Eden stuck to the position which the Cabinet had approved, and Dulles was not at all pleased. After this meeting a rather featureless communique was issued.

Three days later Eden discovered, to his great indignation, that Dulles had pressed on and, without waiting for the results of the Geneva Conference, had taken steps towards setting up a military and political bloc in South-East Asia. Eden instructed the British Ambassador in Washington to protest, and his telegraphed message ended thus: "Americans may think the time past when they need consider the feelings or difficulties of their allies. It is the conviction that this tendency becomes more pronounced every week that is creating mounting difficulties for anyone in this country who wants to maintain close Anglo-American relations." The tone of this telegram, unusually firm for Eden, shows the depth of his indignation at US disregard for the opinion of the British Government.

Dulles' attempts to hasten the organisation of "collective action" in Indochina made Eden and his colleagues quite nervous. There were emergency Cabinet meetings, which confirmed approval for the position already taken. In his meetings with American representatives Eden repeated again and again that their plan was highly dangerous and could lead to a third world war.

So he feared a major war in Asia—why? There were several reasons. The British people would not only have disapproved of such a war, they would have taken energetic action against it. The Asian members of the Commonwealth—India, Pakistan, Burma, Ceylon—would have objected most strongly to any such measures being taken in Indochina, and any British participation in applying them would be fraught with immense complications in relations be-

tween Britain and those countries. A major war in Asia would require the despatch of British and French forces thither, and these could only be taken from Europe itself. Thus the European theatre—in the eyes of British politicians the most important theatre—of confrontation with the USSR and the other socialist countries would be left bare. The E.D.C. project would fail, and the idea of building up a position of strength against the USSR in Europe would have to be abandoned. That did not suit the British Government at all.

Furthermore, there were well-founded fears that any extension of colonialist imperialist intervention in Indochina, creating a major theatre of war, would make that war from the very start one against an alliance of anti-imperialist countries. In that case a mighty united front of the peoples of Asia would be created, which would bring together over a billion people and sweep away for ever all colonial regimes in that part of the globe. And Britain would then lose finally what footholds she had in Asia.

Lastly, Churchill and Eden could not help but see that participation in the action proposed by the Americans would inevitably entail still greater British dependence upon the USA.

Hence Eden's firm stand in the talks with Dulles, and the failure of the American attempt to wreck the Geneva Conference.

Eden went to Geneva not by train, as he used to do in the thirties, but by special military aircraft. At Orly airport he broke his journey briefly, to inform his French colleague that the British Government's position was unchanged.

Although Eden, and his biographers and British historical writers have tried to attribute to him alone the success of the Geneva Conference in settling the problem of Indochina, in fact that success was largely due to the efforts of the Soviet delegation, which had been sent to Geneva with firm instructions from the Soviet Government to ensure that the Indochina war be brought to an end. Five years later, Eden expressed recognition of the constructive contribution made by the Soviet delegation. "Molotov was genuinely anxious to reach settlement," he wrote. "In our frequent private conversations he often came forward with some helpful suggestion or concession, which enabled the work of the conference to move forward."

Eden too was anxious that agreement should be reached,

for failure of the conference would have freed the hands of the American Government to go ahead with their risky adventure, which London saw as fraught with danger. The Geneva Conference exacerbated Anglo-American relations to the highest degree. Dulles indignantly refused to take part in it, leaving his deputy, Bedell Smith, to head the American delegation, though all the other delegations were led by the appropriate Ministers.

Agreement was reached at the Geneva Conference on the cessation of hostilities in Indochina. A most dangerous flashpoint of war in South-East Asia was thus eliminated (though not for long, as it later proved). This major success for the cause of peace was the result of consistent and energetic struggle by the Soviet Union and all peace-loving forces to get the war in Indochina brought to an end. A positive part was also played by the contradictions between Britain and France on the one hand and the USA on the other. It is the effect of these which explains Eden's position at the Geneva Conference. It was perhaps the most progressive act on his part among all the manifold diplomatic steps undertaken by Britain in the post-war years. It served the cause of peace, and that is what gives it immense significance. It is, at the same time, an exception to the political rule followed in general by Eden and his government.

Time was to show that the British Government did not, by and large, have a realistic appreciation of the major processes going on in South-East Asia. At the beginning of September 1954, at Manila in the Philippines, a conference took place on the initiative of the USA but with Britain's very active support, which ended with the signing of the treaty which brought SEATO into existence. This development had, as was mentioned above, been planned most secretly, in advance. The members of the new military and aggressive bloc, created for the purpose of struggling against the revolutionary and national liberation movement in South-East Asia, were the USA, Britain, France, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, the Philippines and Pakistan. The absence from the conference in Manila of India, Indonesia, Burma and Ceylon was a significant indication of the imperialist and colonialist nature of the new bloc.

Eden was busy trying to get a re-vamped version of the E.D.C. off the ground, and he was represented in Manila by Lord Reading. The positions taken by the British Gov-

ernment at the conferences in Geneva and Manila are in sharp contrast one with the other. Therefore justified was the statement by the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs (issued in connection with the conference in Manila), which drew attention to the declarations at the Geneva Conference, made by official British (and French) representatives, that their governments allegedly sought normalisation of relations with the peoples of Asia. "Attention is drawn to the fact," the statement said, "that some of the participants in the conference in Manila recently expressed their understanding of the national needs of the peoples of Asia... But it is permissible to ask how those declarations can be made consistent with participation by Britain and France in an aggressive military bloc directed against Asian countries?" By its signature in Manila to the treaty on the defence of South-East Asia, the British Government made itself party to acts against the freedom and security of the peoples of that region.

The year 1954 was drawing to a close. Eden was devoting all his efforts to re-vitalising the E.D.C. project. The British Government was attempting, on its own and leaving the Americans out of it, to form a new union of states in the framework of which the FRG would be afforded the possibility of re-arming. London's separate actions reflected Anglo-American contradictions in Europe, the struggle between Britain and the USA for the leading role on the Continent. All in all British diplomacy intended to seize from the Americans guidance of the military grouping of European states.

On September 5, Eden notes, he went to spend the weekend at his country home in Wiltshire, to think about the situation as it then was. While in his bath (diplomats conceive new ideas in the oddest places!) he suddenly bethought himself of using the Brussels Treaty of 1948 on the Western Alliance for the purpose of bringing the FRG into "the European family". The inclusion of the FRG, and of Italy too, in that alliance would make the FRG a political part of a united Europe. So far as the military side of things was concerned, the FRG must be included in NATO, and her re-militarisation realised within its framework.

On returning to London on Monday, Eden wrote a minute for Churchill, asking his permission to undertake an urgent mission to several European capitals, to sound out the possibilities for such a plan, and if these were good, to pre-

pare the ground for an international conference. Having got the Prime Minister's sanction, Eden went off to the Continent, accompanied by only one other person—Frank Roberts, a specialist on the Soviet Union. It was all done without any intimation being given to Washington.

The itinerary was planned in such a way as to leave the most difficult negotiations—those in Paris—to the end; in that way Eden could bring pressure to bear on the French Government by telling them that everyone else agreed, they were the only ones objecting, and that such objections were likely to leave them in a position of isolation.

The first stop was Brussels, where Eden met his opposite numbers from Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxemburg. His notes on this meeting are filled with rapture. His reception was as good as it could be, the food was excellent, the British Embassy was beautifully appointed. Eden saw all around him in a rose-tinged glow, since the Ministers of the Benelux countries, as he writes, approved the procedure he suggested. "They thought that a nine-power conference was an essential preliminary to a full N.A.T.O. meeting", and hoped it would take place in London.

Eden wrote in his diary, of the Brussels meeting: "I found all three Benelux Ministers fully aware of the realities of the international situation and, in particular, of the dangers of Germany slipping over to the Russians, and of America retreating to the peripheral defence of 'fortress America', *on which I had spoken to them* [my italics—V. T.]." So the main arguments used by Eden during his tour of Western European capitals were the threats of Germany moving closer to the USSR, and of America pulling out of Europe.

From Brussels Eden proceeded to Bonn. Talks with Chancellor Adenauer were more significant and more fundamental. This time it was Adenauer's turn to brandish threats. He said that the youth of Germany saw its hopes for the future as bound up with Germany's participation in a united Europe, and that if these hopes were disappointed, they might turn to "bad thoughts". Which being translated meant: either re-arm the FRG within the concept "European idea" or the Germans will start thinking of revanche not only as to the East, but the West too. Eden agreed promptly, and said that this was one of the motives which had led him to put forward his present proposals. Adenauer then proceeded to conjure up the bogey that Eden had been frightening

them with in Brussels: "The consequences for Europe as well as for Germany would be disastrous if Germany fell within the Soviet orbit, either directly or gradually via neutralization."

Adenauer had to get arms for the West German revanchists at all costs and as soon as possible, and he urged haste upon the already hastening Eden. The Chancellor agreed that to admit Germany into NATO would be "the right solution", and since this would mean creation of "a German national army" he was "prepared to accept self-imposed limitations and ... to put this army into an integrated [European] army, if this became possible later". Adenauer also approved of the idea that the FRG and Italy should be brought into the Western Alliance. He hoped that the French too would agree to Eden's outline plan, but noted that it was an important point for most Frenchmen that Britain should participate in this alliance "on a footing of equality with them". The Chancellor saw the departing guest off with hopes for the speedy success of his plans.

In Rome Eden met the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Piccioni. The Italian had no objection in principle to the British Government's plan, but like the Chancellor of the FRG remarked that "the more the United Kingdom engaged itself in assisting a solution, the easier it would be to find one". In other words: if you want a new military organisation, you take part in it the same as everyone else. Neither in Bonn nor in Rome were they prepared to recognise British claims to a particular position in Europe, and advised that such claims should be abandoned.

Here too the politely veiled threat was brought into play. The Italian Minister remarked that "the consolidation of Europe with the association of the United Kingdom ... would weaken neutralist tendencies in Italy, *which unfortunately had a pro-Russian complexion* [my italics—V.T.]".

By and large Eden was satisfied with the talks he had with Italian politicians, and was in a good mood as he got ready to leave Rome. He was staying in a huge, imposing but gloomy building, which had been the German Embassy but was now the British. It boasted a fine garden and a swimming pool. On September 15 Eden was enjoying a dip in the pool, when he was told that a Secretary of the American Embassy was there, unexpectedly, to see him. The American handed him a telegram from Dulles, and demanded an immediate answer.

In Washington they had been watching Eden's journeyings with mounting indignation. Already he had had a difference of opinion with Dulles at the Berlin Conference of Foreign Ministers in February, and had then failed to agree to Dulles' plan for "joint action" in Indochina; at the Geneva Conference the difference between the two Ministers had become even more acute, and now Eden was busy-ing himself with some arrangement for Europe, clearly giving no consideration whatever to the US view. A member of the State Department's staff, Murphy, left Washington hastily for the capitals of Western Europe. Murphy's reports back to Washington must have been alarming enough to make Dulles decide to fly to Europe himself.

His telegram informed Eden that he was flying to Bonn and then on to London. Would Eden please see him at once? That was followed up by violent objections to the inclusion of the FRG and Italy in the Western Alliance.

This was a heavy blow for Eden. Was Dulles going to wreck his entire plan? It would seem that at first, in the heat of the moment, Eden intended to send Dulles a sharpish answer. But the British Ambassador in Rome, Ashley, and Frank Roberts were able to see this particular issue more calmly, and advised him not to do that. In the end Eden contented himself with a short reply that he would be glad to see Dulles in London and would reply to his criticisms then.

Eden admits in his Memoirs that he was worried about the possible results of Dulles' meeting with Adenauer—might it not wreck the agreement he himself had reached with Adenauer. Eden was apprehensive of this sudden visit, "which had been decided on without prior consultation with London or with me". A strange complaint, seeing that he had not given Washington or Dulles any prior intimation of his own proceedings.

Lengthy and difficult negotiations awaited Eden in Paris. He told Mendès-France what his proposals were, and how they had been received by other Ministers in Europe. The French Premier did his best not to commit himself in any way, and confined himself mainly to enquiring about the details of the talks in Brussels, Bonn and Rome. Casting diplomatic courtesy aside, Eden told him that he would prefer to give that account at the forthcoming conference.

Of course the British Foreign Secretary did all he could,

as he himself puts it, "to impress upon MF [Mendès-France] the real dangers of the situation. French negative policy would result in driving Germany into the arms of Russia and U.S. into 'fortress America'", i.e. into isolationism. Mendès-France heard out all these well-worn arguments, provocative as they were (in the part relating to Russia), arguments used by British politicians as far back as the twenties and thirties, and kept up his own refrain: he was "worried about the safeguards and controls which could be devised to allay French fears of German rearmament".

Eden returned to London having won the agreement of those he had seen to the convocation of a nine-power conference in London in late September. When he met Dulles, he expounded his plan for obtaining re-militarisation of Germany, and in the end got his agreement also to the holding of this conference. Both Foreign Ministers considered it indispensable to re-arm Germany against the USSR, and realised that on this issue their two countries must act together. This common interest helped them to overcome their differences.

On September 27, the day before the conference opened, Eden gave Churchill a document which was to determine the position of the British delegation. "If we produce a workable plan," Eden wrote, "the Americans are unlikely to allow it to fail through the lack of the essential American support." The French would accept "German sovereignty and German membership of N.A.T.O." only if they got appropriate guarantees. And further on: "The assurance most likely to strike French opinion is the continued presence of British troops in France." Eden considered that the key to the success of the conference would be for Britain to make a new commitment to maintain her present forces on the Continent, and not to withdraw them against the wishes of the majority of the enlarged Western Alliance. "I realize that this would be an unprecedented commitment for the United Kingdom, but the hard fact is that it is impossible to organize an effective defence system in Western Europe, which in turn is essential for the security of the United Kingdom, without a major British contribution. This situation will persist for many years to come. By recognizing this fact and giving the new commitment, we may succeed in bringing in the Germans and the French together, and keeping the Americans in Europe. If we do not, the conference may fail and the Atlantic alliance fall to pieces."

This was Eden's formulation at the time according to his Memoirs.

Before the conference opened Eden had had exploratory talks with the delegates, and come to the conclusion that without this new commitment by Britain, the conference would end without results. The British were compelled to promise what they had so determinedly avoided promising when the plans for the E.D.C. were being considered—to participate on an equal footing with everyone else in that organisation. At the London conference it was agreed that a further conference should meet in Paris. On October 23, 1954, agreements providing for the re-militarisation of the FRG were signed in Paris, the signatories being Britain, the USA, France, Italy, Canada, the FRG, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxemburg. This formally established a military alliance between Britain and the other parties to the agreements, and the Federal Republic of Germany. Under the Paris Agreements Britain had to put at the disposal of the NATO Supreme Commander in Europe four divisions with appropriate tactical air forces, or such forces as the Supreme Commander might deem equivalent.

The Parliamentary proceedings to get ratification of the Paris Agreements showed up the discontent felt among the British people at this policy of re-militarising West Germany. Forty-two per cent of Members voted for ratification; it was passed only because a very large number of Members abstained.

The British Government was far from sure that the agreements would be ratified in Paris. But the reactionary forces in the French Parliament carried the day, and thus the international agreements on German re-armament were ratified.

This was on December 29, 1954. "As we saw that New Year in with this good news," writes Eden, "I felt we had reason to be satisfied with our work during the preceding months... We could now be sure that future negotiations with the Soviet Union could be conducted from a base of political and military strength." This ecstatic exclamation sums up the whole aim and object of the immense effort he had devoted, first to organising a European Defence Community, then to obtaining the Paris Agreements on the re-militarisation of West Germany.

During Eden's third term as Foreign Secretary, the speed and strength of development of national liberation revolu-

tion dealt a number of heavy blows to British imperialism. The head of the Foreign Office tried as best he could, by political and other means, to defend the interests of the British Empire, but without success. And he was the man compelled to give political and legal recognition to the fact of British imperial retreat in the Middle East under pressure from the peoples' struggle for liberation. The situation was complicated by the fact that the USA was helping to get Britain ejected from Middle Eastern countries, in the hope of taking in hand her positions there. The underlying base of Anglo-American conflict was oil, extracted in Iran and the Arab countries. The advance of the American monopolies in that area had started in the years of the Second World War.

At the time when Eden returned to the Foreign Office Anglo-Iranian relations were extremely strained. For half a century the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company—a British state enterprise, enjoying monopoly rights over the extraction and processing of oil in Iran—had ruled the roost there. After the Second World War the fight of the Iranian people against the AIOC had built up year by year. At the same time the efforts of American oil companies to gain a foothold there also increased.

On May 1, 1951, the Mossadeq Government passed legislation nationalising the AIOC. In his speech on the occasion Mossadeq said that the Iranian people were opening "a hidden treasure upon which lies a dragon". But the "dragon" was by no means prepared to hand the treasure back to the Iranian people voluntarily.

The British Government tried to bring pressure to bear on Iran through UNO and the International Court of Justice. At the same time agents of the AIOC engaged in active sabotage within Iran. London issued threats of military force. "His Majesty's Government," writes Eden, "had moved land forces and a cruiser to the vicinity of Abadan where the fate of the largest oil refinery in the world was at stake. The temptation to intervene ... must have been strong, but pressure from the United States was vigorous against any such action." Actually, however, it was not so much American objections as the fact that the USSR and other socialist countries came out against the British interventionist plans. Public opinion in the Arab countries was excited. The British Government had to beat a retreat.

Monopoly over Iranian oil was at an end for Britain.

It was replaced by a special international consortium for the exploitation of Iran's oil resources. This consortium included the AIOC, a number of American oil companies, the Royal Dutch Shell and a French firm.

In 1954 an agreement was signed in Teheran between the Iranian Government and the international consortium. It was more advantageous to Iran than the conditions under which the AIOC had formerly operated, but the Iranian people was still not master of its own heritage. The country's oil resources still remained in the hands of foreign monopolies, even if not British ones alone. The years of the Iranian people's fight for full economic independence still lay ahead.

"Now, as a result of events in Iran, Egypt became ebullient," writes Eden. "The troubles fomented on the Shatt al Arab,* festered on the Nile." The Egyptian people's fight against the British colonialists had been given immense impetus by the defeat of fascism in the Second World War and the Soviet Union's support for liberation movements. The actual demand of the Egyptians was for annulment of the inequitable Anglo-Egyptian treaty of 1936, which legalised British military occupation of Egypt, continuing for over six decades. Under this treaty Britain could keep ten thousand troops in the Suez Canal zone, but in practice this number was far exceeded, and troops were stationed at various key points in the country. The treaty also provided for preserving the Anglo-Egyptian condominium over the Sudan, which had formerly belonged to Egypt but had been seized by the British in 1898.

The Egyptian people demanded annulment of the 1936 treaty, and cessation of British military occupation. The government in London let it be known that it would remain "firm", and would use force to defend its "rights". Armed clashes occurred between Egyptians and British soldiers. In March 1947, in order to calm the popular masses, the British withdrew their units from Cairo and concentrated them in the Suez Canal zone. But no calm resulted, indeed the situation became even more critical.

In October 1951, on the eve of the return to power of the Churchill-Eden Government, the Egyptian Government declared the 1936 treaty annulled. Three years of obstinate

* A river in southern Iran, in the region of the oil wells and the Abadan refinery.

struggle followed; the British Government sought to get another treaty, still inequitable, concluded with Egypt, and the Egyptians demanded the withdrawal of British troops from their territory, since the annulment of the 1936 treaty had removed the legal justification for their further presence. Mass demonstrations frequently turned into armed clashes, the buildings belonging to British banks, commercial companies and other bodies were set on fire.

"The Americans, as usual, were all the time pressing us to come to terms, especially over the Egyptian claim to sovereignty over the Sudan," writes Macmillan. American interference evoked great annoyance in London. On May 6, 1953, Macmillan noted in his diary: "No doubt the Egyptians ... are hoping to get something out of Dulles."

In Downing Street they realised that a compromise must be found. But what was it to be? Churchill favoured trying to reach agreement with the Egyptian Government that British troops should be withdrawn from the Suez Canal zone, but that the military base there, which had been built up and developed over decades, should be available for immediate use, by the British and the Americans (clearly a sop to the Americans, this) should the need arise, in other words, the British would be retaining the right to "re-entry". The 1936 treaty had to be given up for lost, which would of course involve "considerable loss of prestige". On this last point there was one crumb of comfort, however—the treaty would in any case have expired in 1956.

What alternative could there be? To maintain indefinitely in the canal zone an army eighty thousand strong, surrounded by a hostile people? It was immensely expensive to do that. Even so, there were those in the House of Commons (and in the government too) who were in favour of applying these extreme imperialist measures, which had been effective in the 19th century but were quite out of step with the real balance of power in the world at large in the mid-twenties century.

In the end the Foreign Secretary, helped by his trusty advisers in the Foreign Office, managed to formulate a plan for solving the Egyptian problem along the lines of Churchill's proposals. British troops were to be withdrawn from the Suez Canal, but the base was to be maintained by civilian personnel under conditions which would enable use of it in case of war. As Macmillan remarks, through this

long controversy the British had been thinking largely in terms of opposing the Soviet Union.

On October 19, 1954, an Anglo-Egyptian agreement was signed in Cairo, which provided for the withdrawal of British troops from the Suez Canal zone. It was a great triumph for the Egyptian people, and a great defeat for British imperialism.

The period which began in 1951 was a difficult one for Eden, and not only because his efforts directed mainly against the USSR, socialism, and the national liberation revolution were not attended with success and did not look like being so for a considerable time to come—on top of that, he was worried about his own future.

Churchill was an old man now. In 1951 he was 77 years old. Only a few people knew that two years earlier he had had a stroke, for he recovered from it and went on to carry through two election campaigns and the formation of a government. In 1953 he had a second stroke; his left arm and leg were paralysed, his speech was affected and his face twisted. Moran was sure that even if his patient recovered, he could hardly remain Prime Minister. He intended to issue a medical bulletin to that effect. But Butler and Salisbury insisted that the bulletin should be coached in such terms that no one could tell how serious Churchill's condition was.

Naturally, the question of resignation arose. But Churchill clung to power with all his failing strength. Since at that moment Eden was also ill, the Prime Minister's resignation would have meant that Butler would head the government. Churchill said he would struggle on till the autumn, when Eden should have recovered, and then hand over the reins of government to him. So there was no resignation.

Contrary to the expectations of his doctors and his relations, Churchill recovered from his second stroke too. His powers were only partially restored, but he was capable of chairing Cabinet meetings, and he even made a speech lasting 50 minutes at the Conservative Party's annual conference.

Churchill knew that Eden was waiting for him to resign, that many members of the Cabinet who wanted a strong and energetic Premier to lead them were also waiting, that his medical advisers and his wife all insisted he must resign. But to postpone the evil day he took to inventing excuses

why he really could not resign (a favourite one was negotiations with the Soviet Union that he was going to undertake in person and bring to a triumphant conclusion), and to naming "final" dates which always got postponed.

On August 24, 1954, Macmillan wrote after yet another talk with the Prime Minister that "he had many times in the last few months told Anthony that he was on the point of 'handing over'. First he had told him the Queen's return, that is May, then he had said July; finally, in a letter, written on June 11th (which I had seen), he had categorically told Eden that he would resign the Premiership in September. Anyway, what had he now said to Eden?" At this time the Conservative leader was approaching 80 years of age. To keep his successor happy, Churchill had the great idea of making him Deputy Premier and sending Macmillan to the Foreign Office. This did not appeal to Eden in the least, and the idea was dropped.

This situation was difficult for Eden in two ways. The sphere of foreign policy comes within the competence of both the Foreign Secretary and the Prime Minister. The head of the Foreign Office needs the advice and support of the head of government. They are particularly important to him when grave decisions have to be taken. Churchill, now sick and aged, was always loyal in his support for Eden and loved him like a firstborn son, as he frequently said, but he was not a tower of strength. Besides that, the continual waiting for a change in his political circumstances was a heavy burden on Eden's nervous system. But one must give Eden credit where it is due—he did not try to hasten events, and never intrigued against Churchill.

All things come to an end, and so did Eden's time of weary waiting. In February 1955 it was made known that the Prime Minister would retire at the beginning of April. And in truth, on April 5 Churchill handed his resignation to the Queen, and the next day she "sent for" Eden and entrusted him with the formation of her government. Thus was Eden's lifelong dream realised: he held the highest power in the land.

There was a farewell session of Churchill's Cabinet, at which the old man thanked his colleagues for their collaboration. In the House of Commons the Labour leader, Attlee, in congratulating Eden on his new post, quoted the well-known words of Lord Melbourne: "Why, damn it all, such a position was never held by any Greek or Roman, and if

it only lasts three months it will be worth while to have been Prime Minister of England."

Lord Melbourne's words, in Eden's case, proved, to a certain measure, to be prophetic. Eden was Prime Minister of Britain for 21 months only, after which he ingloriously resigned his premiership and retired from political life in general.

Chapter VI

FAILURE OF A POLICY, FAILURE OF A CAREER

"No two men have ever changed guard more smoothly"—this is Churchill's description of how Eden took over as Prime Minister on April 6, 1955. These were inaccurate words. For the changing of the guard at 10 Downing Street had been preceded by three years of scuffling behind the scenes, with everyone else thinking it was time for Churchill to hand over and the old man not wanting to relinquish power. There were other candidates besides Eden, too. Barbara Castle, a prominent Labour woman, enquired rhetorically apropos of those days: "Have you any idea how much Butler and Eden watch each other for the succession to dead men's shoes?" It was only because everything had already been weighed up, sorted out and settled, in the course of this prolonged activity behind the scenes, that the actual change-over of Prime Ministers took place without any obvious jockeying for position. Another contributory factor was a print-workers' strike, which meant that the London papers did not appear for a time. So the changes at the top did not get the publicity customary in such cases.

In the thirties Eden had been one of the youngest Ministers ever appointed, as we noted in a previous chapter. But in the spring of 1955 he was already 58 years old—a respectable age even by English political standards. It is a fact that in Britain senior statesmen are highly valued, the argument being that years of political activity have furnished them with wisdom and experience. André Maurois in his biography of Disraeli remarked that "old age is generally an advantage to a politician, and in England particularly so... The English love old statesmen, worn and polished by much struggle, just as they love old leather and old wood."

The British press gave its unanimous approval to Eden's assumption of the highest office. "It is fortunate for Britain," said the *Yorkshire Post*, "that there exists to succeed Sir

Winston a leader who is a world statesman in his own right... The prestige and fortunes of Britain remain in safe hands." And the next day's number of the same paper went on: "Because of his outstanding success as Foreign Secretary, some people have asked whether he has the gifts of a good Prime Minister. Such questionings are unintelligent. He will command respect in the Cabinet room, in the House and in the country." While the semi-official Conservative *Daily Telegraph* declared that "training, knowledge and courage are in high degree the unquestionable assets of our new Prime Minister".

The *Manchester Guardian* gave as its opinion that "power will probably be distributed in the new Government between a quadrumvirate consisting of Sir Anthony Eden, Mr. R. A. Butler, Mr. Harold Macmillan, and Lord Salisbury: and the new Prime Minister, to begin with at any rate, may only be first among equals."

There were naturally, though much to Eden's annoyance, comparisons made in the press between himself and Churchill, with efforts being made to discover virtues in the new Prime Minister that the old one had lacked. "Sir Anthony is no doubt a much lesser man than Sir Winston," said the *Sunday Dispatch*. "But he may, despite, or even because of that, very likely prove a better Prime Minister for this day and age... Above all, Sir Anthony possesses the quality that Sir Winston lacks—that of making the diplomacy and actions of his country cease to be objects of hatred and suspicion among Asians, Arabs and Africans."

All these positive traits of Eden's were deduced by the press from the totally false image of him which it had itself created. As often happens in politics, people fell victim to their own propaganda. Before long the true likeness of the new Prime Minister was to be fully revealed to the peoples of Asia and Africa, and to his fellow-countrymen. But it took a year for that to happen.

Eden's first task on becoming head of government was to re-organise the Cabinet to his liking. At the same time he had to settle the matter of when a General Election should be held. It was true that the Conservatives had a majority, even if a small one, in the existing House of Commons, and that the full Parliamentary term had still eighteen months to run. But there could be no certainty that in eighteen months' time circumstances would be more favourable for the Conservative Party.

In the spring of 1955 the economic situation was tolerably good, and that is very important at election times. Besides which Eden, now Conservative leader, had a few months previously enjoyed a great personal triumph: in Geneva he had been personally involved in the conference which had brought the war in Indochina to an end, and at practically the same time he had brought off the conclusion of the agreements whereby West Germany was to be re-armed. For performing this last "service" Eden was lauded to the skies by all the voices of reaction. The Queen awarded him the highest honour available, making him a Knight of the Garter. This made him Sir Anthony, and his wife Lady Eden. While the part he had played in Geneva gave him popularity among all who wanted to see a relaxation of international tension, i.e. the broad mass of voters. So the temptation was very great for the Conservatives to cash in on all these favourable circumstances, hold a General Election early, and assure themselves of a five-year mandate to govern.

Yet neither Eden nor his colleagues were fully confident of victory. But they decided to risk it. On the advice of the Prime Minister the Queen dissolved Parliament and fixed the date of the election as May 26. This decision meant that Cabinet changes could be kept to a minimum, leaving major changes till after the election.

First among the minimum changes was the need to find a suitable incumbent for the Foreign Office. The candidate whom Eden would most have liked to see there was Marquess Salisbury. The two were great friends, and had the same political sympathies. Eden very much wanted to see his friend succeed him at the Foreign Office, but Salisbury was a Marquess and in the 20th century the appointment of titled persons to responsible government posts is not popular with the masses, and British ruling circles, anxious to "democratise" the façade of their imperialist state, have to take that into account. This proved an obstacle to Eden's hopes. Salisbury had to be content with the second-rank portfolio of Lord President of the Council.

It was Harold Macmillan who became the new Foreign Secretary. He was a man of Eden's generation, he had been in both the Churchill governments, and had connections in the world of big business publishing. The new head of the Foreign Office was fully tried and trustworthy politically, and there were no differences of principle between him and Eden.

"Every Cabinet needs its counsellors ... who can be relied upon," wrote Eden. No doubt it was with this in mind that he brought into the Cabinet as Secretary for Commonwealth Relations Sir Alex Douglas Home, a well-known supporter of "appeasement" of fascism, who had accompanied Neville Chamberlain to Munich in 1938. Sir Alex Douglas Home could boast an enviably consistent record: he had never disassociated himself from the policy of "appeasement", had always continued to consider it correct, and only regretted that it had not worked. One may reasonably ask, why did Eden make Home a member of his Cabinet? Might it not be that the policy of re-arming West Germany and opposing her to the Soviet Union was not so very different from the policy of Neville Chamberlain?

Another old Munichite, Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick, was confirmed by Eden as Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, a key position in which he would be able, in the normal course of his duties, to guide and direct Macmillan. "I felt that his active and fertile mind," says Eden, "would team well with the high quality of Foreign Office leadership under Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick."

But for the time being all the efforts of the Eden Government and of the Conservative Party were bent on securing victory in the elections. Urgent measures were set on foot with this in mind, in both home and foreign policy.

The Conservative leaders feared a possible defeat. "No one can tell how this election will turn out," reads an entry in Macmillan's diary. But the Tories did not manage to think up anything very original to swing the votes their way.

Eden's Government, like so many of its predecessors, threw economic sops to the working people and the petty bourgeoisie. But the main vote—catching operation was to be in the field of foreign policy. The questions of war and peace were very acute in 1955. The desire for detente was strong among the mass of the people. The Labour Party, in its contest with the Conservatives, made effective use of the fact that Churchill and his associates came out as instigators of another world war. In an attempt to persuade the ordinary Briton that such was not the case, Churchill repeatedly spoke of his readiness to hold high-level talks with the Soviet Union. And these declarations were made in terms giving the voters to understand that if anyone was capable of reaching agreement with the Soviet Government, it could only be the Conservatives. In actual fact, of course, they had

not the least intention of calling a halt to the cold war.

As far back as the spring of 1954 decision had been reached in London that an initiative should be taken in calling a conference of the heads of state of Britain, the USA, France and the USSR, "for the purpose of considering anew the problem of the reduction and control of armaments and of devising positive policies and means for removing from all the peoples of the world the fear which now oppresses them". But by the spring of 1955, as Macmillan notes, "nothing had yet been done". And the British people anxiously awaited deeds which would free them from the threat of another world war.

In this situation the Eden Government decided to utilise popular alarm at the state of the world for their own ends. The Foreign Office displayed, as ostentatiously as possible, initiative in the direction of getting a Summit conference held.

A sticky problem was posed by the Americans, who overtly did not want such a meeting. But, as Kirkpatrick remarked to Macmillan, the US President would probably not be "excessively annoyed" at the Prime Minister saying he was in favour of a Summit meeting, "since the Americans are adjusted to the idea that even the best of friends must embarrass one another for electoral reasons".

Eden and Macmillan both made utterances calculated to rouse hopes that a Summit conference would meet soon. It was spoken of in terms intended to leave no doubt that this would be a meeting like those at Yalta and Potsdam in 1945. This in turn meant that expectations were aroused of great decisions being taken when the leaders of the USSR were met. Churchill could raise such hopes without worrying: he knew that his days in politics were numbered. But Eden and Macmillan had to be more circumspect. They knew very well that no "final solution" would be found through a conference with Soviet representatives, for the ruling circles of Britain and the US did not want agreement on equal terms and to mutual advantage between themselves and the USSR. Consequently, some time after the Summit meeting had taken place that fact was going to become obvious to the British people, and they would put the blame on Eden and his party.

By way of ensurance against that happening, the British Government altered the previously existing concept of a Summit meeting. As history then knew them, they were fairly brief meetings between leaders, the latter having full powers of decision on major problems in international rela-

tions and actually taking decisions on them. Efficiency and results had been the characteristic features of such meetings. In the spring of 1955 Eden and Macmillan brought forth the idea of turning the coming conference into the very antithesis of those previous meetings—into a conference, not bound to reach any final decisions, which would be only an introduction to an endless series of other conferences, the eventual outcome of which could not be foreseen, and which could at any moment be broken off. "I had now to promote," writes Macmillan, "the concept of a prolonged period of negotiation, perhaps over years and even generations, rather than a single meeting which would almost certainly fail." This concept promised a reliable means of befogging the peoples, and had a chance of gaining American approval. Eden sent President Eisenhower a telegram setting out the British concept of a Summit meeting.

On May 7, 1955, Macmillan talked in Paris with the US Secretary of State, Dulles, and persuaded him to agree to a Summit meeting, new British style. "Eden and I," say Macmillan's *Memoirs*, "were very anxious that this plan should be considered," since it was "a practical approach to the problems before us". But the main thing was, Macmillan emphasises, that "it would, of course, help us in our election stunt". The American historian, Fleming, holds that "the one thing which could easily defeat Eden was popular frustration over the long delay in meeting the Russians at the summit".

Eisenhower and Dulles were reluctant to support the idea of a Summit meeting. But as they were anxious to help the Conservatives, they did allow themselves to be associated with the proposal that one should be held. On May 29, 1955, it was said in the American press that Dulles had only let himself be saddled with such a conference because Eden grossly feared losing the General Election.

At the very last moment of Macmillan's negotiations with Dulles in Paris, the Americans tried to get "partial involvement" in the conference by themselves accepted. Macmillan records in his diary: "(Dulles) asked me whether I would think it would do if the Vice-President came instead of the President. Thinking this was a joke, I told him of the famous music-hall joke. 'Poor Mrs. Jones, what a terrible thing has happened to her!' 'What has happened to her?...' 'Why, she had two fine sons. One of them went down in the "Titanic", the other became Vice-President of the United States. Neither of them was ever heard of again.' ... Foster Dulles

put on a look of saying 'We are not amused'." Later Dulles said, Macmillan continues, "I guess poor Nixon* wouldn't like that." But the British side, for whom the official façade of the coming conference was the main thing, could not agree to Nixon attending in place of Eisenhower.

As for the Soviet Government, it readily agreed to high-level talks with Britain and the USA, hoping through them to achieve some relaxation in the international tension. It was Moscow that the initiative actually belonged to in conducting the talks to improve the international atmosphere and discuss the controversial issues that aggravated it.

On May 11 the announcement was made that there would shortly be a high-level meeting between representatives of the USSR, Britain, the USA and France. That part of the British press which backed the Conservatives began to exaggerate the significance of this announcement out of all proportion, the election campaign being then in full swing. Macmillan reminisces: "I had perhaps been able to give more important help by the arrangement for the top-level meeting than by any speeches that I could have delivered, however eloquent."

The election of May 26, 1955, brought victory for the Conservatives. The action taken by the Eden-Macmillan-Butler Government, both at home and abroad, was not the only factor that helped to make this possible. The Labour leaders had no radical campaigning platform to rouse a sympathetic response from the voters. Their programme in essentials was no different from that of their opponents.

The Conservatives were further assisted by a split in the upper ranks of the Labour Party. At that time the right-wing leaders were conducting a savage witch-hunt against those on the left wing of the party who opposed the arms race and the re-militarisation of the FRG. As a result of this, some party activists took no part in the election campaign, and many rank-and-file Labour supporters did not use their votes.

The Conservatives obtained an absolute majority in the House of Commons: 344 seats as against 277 for Labour. Their Parliamentary position was thus made stronger, and Eden's Government could feel their hands to some extent free.

How did that government propose to make use of the opportunities thus given them? Recalling his early days as Prime Minister, Eden notes: "I was clear what I wanted to

* Richard Nixon at that time was Vice-President.

do. Abroad, I foresaw a growing communist ambition and wished the free world to find a closer unity in every continent to meet it. At home, I believed that a property-owning democracy could be encouraged to grow and that it fitted the national character as Socialism did not." A clear-cut programme, then: a fight against communism on a world scale, and opposition to the labour movement in Britain by attempting to reconcile class interests and smooth over class contradictions as far as possible.

The concept of "a property-owning democracy" was aimed not only at inducing the workers to refrain from fighting the employers, in return for the tempting prospect of personal enrichment. Eden's scheme of things was in antithesis to the Labour programme, which envisaged further nationalisation of industry. Conservative propaganda told the working people that nationalisation, making industry the property of the state, was no use to them, that it was a much more profitable and reliable way forward for them to become co-owners of industrial enterprises. They were to own the plants and factories where they worked, not through the state, but directly, by acquiring shares and getting a portion of the profits. "If we (the Conservatives) were to improve our position," writes Eden, "I must in particular get my message to the better skilled industrial worker, who could be expected to benefit most from the kind of society we wanted to create." The rallying cry of "Get rich!" was addressed mainly to the working-class aristocracy.

Apart from the general concept of "a property-owning democracy", though, the election campaign of 1955 was required to have in it details of specific measures which would offer a prospect of better conditions for the masses as from the day after the Conservatives were returned to power. So Eden in his election speeches promised to modernise and re-equip railways, to reconstruct and develop the road system; to "press ahead with the building of more houses and more schools"; to carry through a "hospital building programme" and to launch the "onslaught on slum clearance"; "to provide another million new school places in the next five years and to improve existing school buildings and equipment"; to carry out a "progressive social policy". "Our task is not complete," Eden told the electorate. "Much remains to do. I ask you to renew our mandate to work for peace abroad and the creation of a property-owning democracy at home."

The Conservatives' mandate was renewed, and the months immediately following were to show how far removed from the promises given to the electorate the real policy of the Eden Government was, both at home and abroad.

The Conservative Government, headed first by Churchill and later, from May 1955 on, by Eden, was operating under complicated conditions: class contradictions were becoming sharper and the class struggle was building up within the country. By the beginning of the fifties the right-wing Labour leaders, who were in power from 1945 to 1951, had completed a period of political reforms within Britain. Then, when ruling circles felt that the danger of fierce class battles—sparked off by the popular swing to the left in the course of the fight against fascism—had passed, the Labour Government went over to policy of limiting so far as possible the beneficial effects for working people which the previous reforms had produced.

Having "worked over" the masses ideologically on a wide scale, and having burdened Britain with participation in anti-communist, anti-Soviet military blocs, the Labour Government set about re-arming the country in accord with NATO's aggressive plans. It set an arms race on foot, allocating in July 1950 the first, relatively modest sum for that purpose — £ 100 million. But only one month later a re-armament programme was announced which would cost £ 3,400 million, and in January 1951 this was raised to £ 4,700 million, for a three-year re-armament programme.

The change from concessions to the workers towards encroachments on their living standards executed by the Attlee Government provided a stimulus to class struggle, which found expression in the growing number of strikes.

For Eden, who had all his life devoted his whole attention to matters of foreign policy, it was an unaccustomed and unpleasant task to cope with the country's internal problems. But the Prime Minister had no choice but to do it. "From the moment of my arrival in Downing Street," he writes, "a series of strikes took all my attention." A print-workers' strike had commenced when Churchill was still in office, and was still in progress when Eden came in. And there was a threat of strike action by railwaymen and dockers, which could paralyse the economic life of the country.

At election meetings Eden had been campaigning for "a property-owning democracy", calling on the workers to endeavour to become capitalists; on returning to London from

his constituency the morning after voting took place, he was busy thinking about how to crush the railwaymen's and dockers' strike that had begun. Four days later, a state of emergency was proclaimed. This meant that the British constitution was in abeyance and that the government was empowered to make all regulations necessary, including bringing in the troops, against the strikers. Thus the very first days in power of Eden's Cabinet were marked by measures of such a reactionary nature that even Conservatives only have recourse to them in extremity. So much for Eden's "democracy" so far as workers were concerned.

Before long the British working people encountered another aspect of that "democracy". On the eve of the election the Conservatives had made some concessions, though these were small, in the Budget. Five months later, in October 1955, the government brought in a supplementary Budget which not only cancelled the concessions made in spring, but embodied measures which would bring down living standards for working people quite considerably.

Another three months on, and it transpired that even these economic sacrifices by the workers were "not enough". In February 1956 the government put through a number of "measures against inflation", which bore most hardly upon the working class. The regular annual Budget, in April 1956, put up the taxes on consumer goods.

These actions by the government aroused indignation among the broad masses of the people. Things had so fallen out that the government had not been able to accompany these measures by any others, however superficial, which might have been popular and have retained the psychological balance in their favour. By the beginning of 1956 discontent with the government was very definite, and growing month by month. A great deal of the odium, naturally, fell upon the Prime Minister. Hopes that Eden would be "a good Prime Minister" had evaporated pretty quickly, and by now no one believed it any more.

At the end of 1955 Eden made some changes in his government. Butler was replaced as Chancellor of the Exchequer by Macmillan, and the latter's successor at the Foreign Office was Selwyn Lloyd.

So far as seniority in the Conservative hierarchy was concerned, Macmillan was entirely suitable as Chancellor of the Exchequer. But Eden had other reasons too. The Prime Minister wanted someone at the Foreign Office who was

rather more accommodating and would raise no objection to Eden's continual interventions in matters of foreign policy. Macmillan had wanted to be master in his own Ministry; he did not like being supervised all the time by Eden. Altogether, the changes in the composition of the government bore out the rumours of friction and disagreement among its members, although Eden strenuously denied these.

Eden's reputation in the eyes of the British people was also considerably damaged by the fact that he was largely responsible for the annulment of the Anglo-Soviet treaty of alliance in the war and cooperation thereafter, which he had himself signed in 1942 as operative for a term of twenty years. Of course the Attlee-Bevin Labour Government had done a lot to torpedo the allied relationship between Britain and the USSR which had been brought into being in the course of the war against the common enemy. But it was Eden, as Foreign Secretary in the Churchill Government, who completed the ill-omened work. He devoted immense pains to bringing West Germany into NATO—a military and political aggressive bloc directed against the Soviet Union and the other socialist states, and to organising West Germany's re-militarisation. It was under the Conservative Government of Churchill and Eden that Britain and the Federal Republic of Germany united in a military alliance within the framework of NATO. This was in direct contravention of the Anglo-Soviet treaty, which bound both sides to take no part in blocs or coalitions directed against either party.

The Soviet Government, having been given convincing proof that Eden's arrival in Downing Street would not bring any change in the British Government's line towards the USSR, submitted for consideration by the Supreme Soviet Presidium the proposal that the Anglo-Soviet treaty of 1942 be annulled.

On May 7, 1955, the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet passed a decree which noted that the Soviet Union had consistently sought to maintain and consolidate the Anglo-Soviet treaty, being guided by the conviction that that treaty, with the collaboration in battle of the British and Soviet peoples behind it, was in the interests of the security of both states, and that the preservation and development of friendly Anglo-Soviet relations was an important pre-condition for the peace and security of Europe; but that Britain, contrary to the obligations assumed by her under the treaty, had become a party to the Paris Agreements, which had led

to a renewal of German militarism, and had entered into a military alliance with West Germany which was directed against the USSR. Inasmuch as the British Government had directly contravened its obligations under the Anglo-Soviet treaty and had thereby in fact rendered it null and void, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet had decreed "to annul, as having become invalid, the Treaty between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United Kingdom of Great Britain of Alliance in the War Against Hitlerite Germany and Her Associates in Europe and of Collaboration and Mutual Assistance Thereafter, of May 26, 1942".

To counter the imperialist policy of splitting Europe into antagonistic military blocs, the socialist countries advanced the idea of creating a system of collective security. The Western powers refused. Under these conditions, the socialist countries found themselves obliged to take further measures for their own security. On May 14, 1955, they concluded the Warsaw Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance—a treaty that is defensive in nature. This treaty was a response to the growing danger of a new world war, and to the threat by then existing to the national sovereignty of the peace-loving states.

The Warsaw Treaty was an important step in the consolidation of the forces of the socialist states in their opposition to the world of capitalism. The balance of forces, as between socialism and capitalism, was continually shifting to the advantage of socialism.

Ten years had passed since the end of the Second World War. Britain and the USA had used those ten years to unleash a cold war against the Soviet Union and, employing the threat of using the atomic weapons which they had been stockpiling, to try and force the USSR to capitulate.

As soon as atomic weapons had been produced, the leaders of the Conservative Party declared their firm intention of using them in the confrontation against the Soviet Union. This most important fact is attested by numerous published documents.

Field-Marshal Alanbrooke, Chief of the Imperial General Staff and an intimate of Churchill's during the war, has recorded in his Memoirs how the head of the British Government reacted in July 1945 to Truman's message about the successful testing of an atomic bomb. Churchill, he says, "let himself be carried away by the very first and rather scanty reports of the first atomic explosion. He was already see-

ing himself capable of eliminating all the Russian centres of industry without taking into account any of the connected problems, such as delivery of the bombs, production of the bombs, possibility of Russians also possessing such bombs, etc. He had at once painted a wonderful picture of himself as the sole possessor of these bombs and capable of dumping them where he wished, thus all-powerful and capable of dictating to Stalin."

To dictate the imperialist powers' conditions to the Soviet Union, and compel it to accept them, strength was needed. The kernel of that strength, in the opinion of the imperialist leaders, was to be atomic weaponry (and later hydrogen too). As the American researcher Andrew J. Pierre notes: "Churchill, Eden and Macmillan called for a policy of firmness and strength for the West and specifically for Britain. The stronger the nation, the greater her influence in international politics and the more conciliatory the Russians would be."

In Washington policy towards the Soviet Union was formulated in the autumn of 1946 in what has come to be known as the Clifford memorandum, which US authors describe as "a fundamentally important American state paper... It charted the postwar prospect [for American policy — *V.T.*] with startling prescience." "These are statements of the foreign-policy principles, with particular bearing on the U.S.S.R., that Truman took as his guide," writes the US historian Arthur Krock.

The memorandum starts from the premise that peaceful coexistence of communist and bourgeois states is impossible. "The language of military power" is in their opinion the only language in which to address the Soviet Government.

"The Soviet Union's vulnerability is limited," announced the memorandum, "due to the vast area over which its key industries and natural resources are widely dispersed, but it is vulnerable to atomic weapons, biological warfare, and long-range air power. Therefore, in order to maintain our strength at a level which will be effective in restraining the Soviet Union, the United States must be prepared to wage atomic and biological warfare... A war with the U.S.S.R. would be 'total' in a more terrific sense than any previous war."

That was the programme envisaged by imperialist circles: either they would succeed in "restraining" the Soviet Union by threat of force, or they might have to go as far as making

war upon it—atomic and biological warfare. The American strategists had allowed a certain gleam of realism to creep in when they granted the possibility of the Soviet Union also acquiring weapons of mass destruction. In that case, they reckoned, it would be wiser to refrain from unleashing “total” war against the USSR. “Whether it would actually be in this country’s interest,” the memorandum stated, “to employ atomic and biological weapons against the Soviet Union in the event of hostilities is a question that would require careful consideration... The decision would probably be influenced by a number of factors, such as the Soviet Union’s capacity to employ similar weapons, which cannot now be estimated.”

This memorandum was prepared not for propaganda purposes, but for “internal use”, so its authors did not employ talk of the “Soviet threat”, so habitual an expression for the imperialist propaganda machine. A most significant circumstance. It is also interesting that President Truman in his day considered that the USSR did not want conflict with the USA. “At no time did Truman believe the Soviets would go to war with the United States,” says Krock.

British policy and strategy over the first post-war decade coincided completely with those of America. Naturally enough, since the alliance with the US was the keystone of the arch in British foreign policy. True, to begin with they were in no hurry in Britain to start producing nuclear weapons. They were short of the material resources for this, and hopes were strong that the Americans would eventually part with the secret of the atomic bomb, which British scientists had largely helped them to discover. Besides, in case of war the atomic potential of the USA would surely be on the side of the British, thanks to their status as allies. And lastly, the politicians in London, whether Labour or Conservative in allegiance, were filled with unshakeable confidence that the USSR—which they viewed as the enemy—should it ever finally acquire atomic weapons, would take a very long time to do so.

Then suddenly, in August 1949, Western technical devices detected an atomic explosion in the Soviet Union. “The rapidity of Soviet atomic development had come as a surprise in London and Washington,” A. J. Pierre notes.

Immediately following its own development of the atomic weapon, the Soviet Union advanced the demand that production and use of such weapons should be banned. It continued to make insistent demands to that effect even after

the atomic bomb had been placed at the disposal of the Soviet armed forces. The position of the USSR received ever-increasing support from public opinion in other countries. Britain was no exception.

For this reason, when the Labour Government under Attlee finally decided to set in motion work on production of a British atomic bomb, it concealed that decision from the people and from Parliament. The work proceeded under conditions of the deepest secrecy. Parliament ratified the assignation of large sums under the subhead of "Public Buildings in Great Britain", little suspecting what this hid.

How is this deception of Parliament to be explained? The existence of atomic weapons in the Soviet Union removed any need for secrecy, and the Conservatives' readiness to support the arms race meant that allocation of money for this purpose would be sure of Parliamentary approval. So the need to keep the atomic weapon programme a secret from the people was the only possible explanation of the Labour Government's behaviour, so sharply at variance with its protestations of respect for the will of the people as expressed through Parliament, for British democracy, etc., etc.

The Churchill-Eden Government speeded up work on atomic weaponry. To begin with this was a question of prestige. Conservative politicians hoped that Britain, once in possession of its own atomic bomb, would be able to restore its former status as a Great Power. Some optimists even dreamed of attaining the status of a super-power by this means.

The reliance placed on atomic weapons logically brought British ruling circles to the readiness to be first to deliver an atomic blow. Macmillan, during his spell as Minister of Defence, noted in his diary on November 25, 1954: "It is quite impossible to arm our forces with *two* sets of weapons—conventional and unconventional... This means that if the Russians attacked... with conventional weapons only ... we should be forced into the position of *starting* [my italics—V.T.] the nuclear war."

On October 3, 1952, the first British atomic bomb was exploded off the Monte Bello Islands. This was three years after similar tests had taken place in the Soviet Union. Britain had been able to solve this complex scientific and technological problem on her own. But her government was incapable of producing a correct assessment of the situation. Ample evidence of that is offered by a Cabinet document of 1952 known as the "Global Strategy Paper".

The plan was the logical outcome of a number of military and economic measures already taken. Immediately after the end of the Second World War, the Chiefs of Staff had taken it as axiomatic that there would be "ten years without war". But in 1950, after the conclusion of the Western Alliance and the North Atlantic pact, the British Government reviewed this principle and began to base its military planning on the assumption that a major war might break out in two or three years' time.

The Conservatives, taking over from Labour, realised that the country's economy might collapse under the burden of huge military expenditure, and extended the term within which the already existing three-year programme, adopted by the Labourites, was to be carried out.

But so far as the essence of the matter was concerned, it was the Churchill-Eden Conservative Government which set the war preparations machine in operation at full throttle, and which formulated the strategic plan which provided the guidelines for them and for their successors for many years to come.

In the spring of 1952 the government commissioned the Chiefs of Staff to prepare a fundamental analysis of Britain's strategic capabilities and tasks, taking into account the specific conditions as then prevailing: the role of nuclear weapons, the existence of NATO, and the state of the British economy.

The "Global Strategy Paper" envisaged that, firstly, Britain and her allies must prepare for war against the Soviet Union, and secondly, that inasmuch as nuclear weapons had revolutionised the technical character of war, they should use them first. Of course the preparations for nuclear war upon the USSR had to be camouflaged with the false premise of possible "Soviet aggression"—this premise was stated even in the document itself that was not meant for publication.

The essence of the Paper's plan lay, in A. J. Pierre's estimation, in the fact that military operations were not to be confined to any local seat of conflict—a massive nuclear strike was to be directed upon the central areas of Russia. The American historian, Rosecrance, has this comment on Britain's global strategy: "The nuclear strength of the United States was already very great; in a war the Strategic Air Command would be able to destroy the Soviet Union as an industrial power."

Just as Churchill's Fulton speech had affected the formulation of imperialism's political strategy, so the "Global Strategy Paper" had a strong impact upon the evolution of the West's strategic doctrine. It made Britain the first country to base its military planning almost completely upon the use of nuclear weapons. It has been stated that this Paper influenced the United States and helped to produce a "New Look" military policy during Eisenhower's presidency. This "New Look" in many ways reiterated the ideas of the "Global Strategy Paper". One American author, Samuel P. Huntington, writes that "changes in American military policy often came two or three years after changes in British military policy. The New Look originated with Churchill and the British Chiefs of Staff in 1951 and 1952; it became American policy in 1953 and 1954."

Imperialist designs of this kind, pregnant with the most disastrous consequences for the whole of humanity, show up particularly clearly the progressive import of the Soviet people's constructive efforts and of the Soviet Union's peace-loving foreign policy, which had barred the way to practical realisation of these disastrous plans.

The success of Soviet scientists, technologists and workers in solving the problem of atomic and hydrogen weapons, and missile delivery vehicles was of immense historic importance. The making in the USSR of atomic, and by 1953 of hydrogen weapons radically altered the world balance of power in favour of socialism. The monopoly on atomic weapons which the USA had temporarily possessed and which provided the basis for the calculations behind Churchill's speech at Fulton, and behind the "Clifford memorandum", and behind the "Global Strategy Paper", now no longer existed. The USSR had succeeded in putting the latest achievements of the scientific and technological revolution in the military sphere at the service of the defence of the camp of socialism and democracy. This made Soviet foreign policy very much more effective and made for the influence which it exerted on the subsequent development of international relations.

History has marked a gross miscalculation of the military and politicians of Britain. In 1950 they were expecting a major war within two or three years. But thanks to the efforts of the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, humanity has been able to avoid such a disaster for several decades.

It is a characteristic trait of the years since the Second

World War that society at large has shown itself able to perceive new phenomena in the political and social development of humanity, able to "catch on" with them more quickly and more clearly than the ruling circles of bourgeois states have been. And this refers to the government of Britain more than to any other one. In the mid-fifties it was unable to realise fully that the changed balance of power made realisation of their "global strategy" plan impossible, that the impact of the Soviet Union's peace-loving foreign policy was growing and would continue to grow, and that capitalist governments were going to have to take account increasingly of the opinions of the broad masses of the people. In the spring and summer of 1955 the working people of Britain, the USA and other countries were demanding ever more insistently of their governments that the latter should reach agreement with the Soviet Union and avert another world war, which would inevitably have turned into a nuclear catastrophe.

By this time the popular movement of resistance to the threat of a new war had reached sweeping dimensions. The peace movement was joined by social groupings that had previously remained neutral. On July 10, 1955, a group of scientists and public men with world-famous names — Albert Einstein, Bertrand Russell, Joliot-Curie, and six others—published an appeal to the nations and their governments to "remember their duty to humanity and forget everything else". The duty referred to being of course that of averting a war of annihilation.

Popular pressure on the British and US Governments was particularly strong in 1955. *The New York Times* noted on July 10 that the agreement by the White House to take part in the forthcoming Summit conference "reflected the tremendous pressure of public opinion". At the opening of the conference President Eisenhower said: "We are here in response to a universal urge."

The British Government too was unable to ignore this pressure from the mass of the people. It had at the same time to take cognisance of the fact that the Soviet Union had at its disposal the most up-to-date means of defence, which would make aggression against it mortally dangerous for the aggressor. Even such a dyed-in-the-wool warmonger as Winston Churchill felt impelled to say in the spring of 1955: "Thus we have only a short time in which to make peace with each other — or to make our peace with God."

Such glimmerings of realism, even if they came rather late in the day, helped to get the British Government to sit down at the negotiating table. Another factor working in the same direction was the growing realisation on the part of the Western powers, who had started the cold war, that they were suffering defeat in it. In November 1954 Macmillan recorded in his diary: "'Cold War' alarms me more than 'Hot War'. For we are not really winning it, and the Russians have a central position ... and a well-directed effort."

By this time serious doubts had already arisen in London (and in Washington too) as to how realistic the policy was which was being pursued by ruling circles in the two countries, yet in neither case did anyone go further and reach the conclusion that the policy should be changed, and relations with the Soviet Union approached on a different basis.

This was reflected in the position adopted by the British Government at the Geneva Conference. The invitation sent to the Soviet Government showed no readiness on the part of the Western powers to reach constructive agreement with the USSR. Having stated that the time had come "for a new effort to resolve the great problems which confront us", London and Washington followed that up with a warning that it would all take a very long time. "In the limited time for which the Heads of Government could meet," says this document, "they would not undertake to agree upon substantive answers to the major difficulties facing the world... The solution of these problems will take time and patience." The last part was no doubt meant for the benefit of the masses.

What, then, were they going to talk about in Geneva? The answer to that question can be found in the talks (or to be more exact the separate caucus-meetings) which were held between the Foreign Ministers of Britain, France and the USA when they had received the Soviet Government's affirmative answer to the invitation. Macmillan writes that "it was understood that the main subjects for discussion would be the problems of Germany, disarmament, and the relations between Russia and the Western Powers". At first sight, a promising agenda.

But what lay behind these very general formulations? Randolph Churchill, who was present at the conference, tells us that the main objective of the West in Geneva "should be the reunification of Germany". Again, not a bad formula:

the Soviet Union was pursuing the same aim. But the true meaning of the formula, however, is discovered in an entry in Macmillan's diary for June 17, 1955.

That day he met Adenauer, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany. They spoke of the forthcoming conference. The Chancellor expressed his conviction that Russia was eager for "a detente and might be got to give up East Germany in exchange for some security in Europe". On the basis of this conviction, Adenauer advised the Western powers to put forward some disarmament move, "for propaganda purposes".

The views of the British Government's leaders fell in entirely with those of the German Chancellor. As Macmillan later stressed in his Memoirs, he had no doubt but that the Russians "would like to reduce the expenditure ... on armaments". He then quotes from his own diary, an entry for June 21: "But will they pay the price? Anyway, will they pay *any* price for something that does not really achieve their purpose?" So what they had in mind was making an attempt, at the conference, to get the USSR to agree to the GDR being merged with the FRG, and the subsequent inclusion of a reunified, bourgeois Germany in NATO. As their contribution, the Western powers were ready to issue vague statements about disarmament and European security. Eden actually worked out a draft of such a statement, in three parts.

Such illusory and naive calculations did no honour to the West German and British politicians. They should by then have been able to grasp the great truth that the Soviet Union, true to its internationalist duty, could not make the present and future of a fraternal socialist state the object of a diplomatic deal.

The preparatory period before the Geneva Conference showed that Britain and her allies were not seeking constructive, equitable agreement with the Soviet Union, agreement conforming with the cause of peace. And that predetermined the outcome of the Summit conference.

The true intentions of the other parties to the talks were no secret to the Soviet Government. It had itself taken the initiative in calling for a Summit conference. At the beginning of February 1955 the international situation, and Soviet foreign policy, had been discussed at a session of the Supreme Soviet. The Declaration on the International Situation then passed said: "The peoples have a vital in-

terest in strengthening universal peace." And it was in the interests of improving the atmosphere internationally, and discussing the controversial issues which were poisoning it, that the idea of a meeting between the four heads of government was put forward.

The question of calling such a meeting had been raised by the Soviet Foreign Minister with his Western colleagues at the signing in Vienna of the State Treaty with Austria, and during the anniversary session of the UN General Assembly in San Francisco. In the course of these talks the limiting approach made by Britain, France and the USA to the aims of such a meeting had become quite clear. So the Soviet Government had little expectation that the Geneva meeting would result in definite solutions to major international problems.

The instructions given to the Soviet delegation to the conference defined its tasks thus: "The main tasks of the conference between the heads of government of the four powers must be to reduce international tension, and to contribute to the creation of the trust which is essential in relations between states. Proceedings are therefore to be guided in such a way that the Conference shall reach decisions in conformity with this objective, or at least a pertinent declaration (or statement)."

World public opinion understood the constructive nature of Soviet intentions for the meeting. *The New York Times* said that the Soviet leaders went to Geneva "seriously desirous of improving the international atmosphere".

The four governments involved agreed, through diplomatic channels, that the Summit meeting should open in Geneva on July 18, 1955. This was the first international meeting at this level that Eden attended as principal representative of Britain. He was accompanied by Macmillan, as Foreign Secretary, by Kirkpatrick, the Permanent Under-Secretary, by Norman Brook, head of the Cabinet Secretariat, and by a group of experts and technical personnel.

The heads of the four delegations were accommodated in different places. Eden returned to a villa which had been put at his disposal by a well-to-do Swiss citizen a year earlier, when he attended the Geneva Conference on Indochina. Macmillan and the Foreign Office staff were at the Beau Rivage Hotel.

The conference started with discussion of the agenda. After a fairly sharp exchange of opinions it was agreed that

there should be discussion of the German question, of European security, of disarmament, and of the development of contacts between East and West.

The representatives of the Western powers, Eden and Eisenhower particularly, put the German question in the foreground. Eden evidently believed, to some extent, that it was possible to settle this question in the interests of the imperialist countries. He hoped that if a good "squeeze" was applied to the Soviet delegation, it might agree to the inclusion of the GDR within the FRG, under one diplomatic formula or another, and that the FRG would still remain within NATO. The British Prime Minister had probably been impressed by the persistent assertions made in Western circles that the position of the Soviet Government was complicated by "internal difficulties", and that "if prodded sufficiently hard they would make necessary concessions". A clear case of wishful thinking, in London and in Washington! And that is a blunder which it is very dangerous for politicians to make.

On the morning of July 17 the British, the French and the Americans met together at the villa where the US President was staying, to agree their stance beforehand. This had long ago become a tradition—that a species of united diplomatic front should be formed against the Soviet side, prior to any important discussions with it. As Eden later recalled, he told Eisenhower and Faure that he considered German unification by far the most important of the questions to be discussed at the conference. The Russians, he remarked, would not be anxious to spend time on this, so "the right tactics for the Western powers were to insist on discussing it and to put forward proposals which the Russians would find difficult to reject". It was agreed among them that pressure should be put on the Soviet delegation to compel it to make concessions on the question of Germany. "If we could make some practical progress at Geneva towards the unification of Germany," Eden told them, "the conference would be a success for the Western powers."

The official discussion of the German question, at the conference itself, also started with a speech by the British head of government. He again brought forward the so-called Eden Plan, which had first appeared at the Berlin Conference of Foreign Ministers of the four powers, in early 1954. This plan provided for the holding of "free elections" in East and West Germany, which were intended to result in

the incorporation of the GDR into the FRG, with a united bourgeois Germany remaining in NATO. Eisenhower supported the British position. The Soviet side put forward its objections.

The British invited the Soviet delegation to dine at their villa. Neither the Americans nor the French were invited. In this unofficial setting (though the "unofficial" nature of such gatherings is something of a polite fiction) Eden continued the process of trying to persuade his guests to agree to his plan for reunification of Germany. Macmillan recalls that during this conversation, at dinner and after, Eden conducted the whole affair with great brilliance, exerting all his charm. But according to Macmillan's own diary entry for July 19, the Soviet delegates remained firm in maintaining that they were "unable to accept the reunification of Germany in NATO, and will fight it as long as they can". At the same time, though, the British entertained no doubt that the Russians "do not want the conference to fail".

Indeed, the Soviet delegation in Geneva advanced the idea of collective security in Europe. It declared that only joint efforts by all European states could provide true security for the peoples of the Continent. And both the German states, the GDR and the FRG, must take part in establishing such a security system. It was clear that Britain, France and the USA had no intention of agreeing to a disbandment of their military blocs, and the draft all-European treaty on collective security, which was proposed by the Soviet delegation, took account of that position.

Eden spoke against the Soviet proposals. He advanced, in opposition to them, the idea of a security treaty to be concluded between the participants in the conference and a united Germany. Under such a treaty Britain, France and the USA were to give "safeguards of security" to the Soviet Union. This was to be their "payment" for agreement by the USSR to give up the GDR to the capitalist world.

One can understand Eden's passionate desire to achieve the elimination of the socialist system in the GDR, and bring it into the capitalist world at all costs. But he can scarcely have seriously believed that the Soviet Union would agree to its own security being dependent upon "safeguards" from the imperialist states. The acceptance of such "safeguards" would have meant the USSR placing itself in a position of dependence upon the Western powers. The Soviet leaders could never have agreed to such a thing even

had they not been aware from history of the true value of British "safeguards". The history of the twenties and thirties affords striking examples of what such "safeguards" had proved to be worth to countries such as France, Poland, etc.

Macmillan notes that during the first round of discussion on this question, Eden asked: "What about safeguards?" and the answer from the Soviet side was: "We are strong; we do not want safeguards."

Eden's arguments against the draft all-European treaty on collective security, as proposed by the Soviet delegation, were feeble and contradictory. The Soviet proposal was unacceptable, he said, because such a treaty "would take years to work out". He must have forgotten, or pretended to have forgotten, the text of the invitation to the conference, in which it was stated in black and white that the solution of the problems facing it would take time and patience. Macmillan estimated the time required as decades or even generations. But nothing like that time would have been required to carry through the Soviet proposals.

The position of the Eden Government on this question is strikingly similar to that of the Heath Government two decades later, when the holding of an all-European conference was mooted.

Eden, Eisenhower and Faure showed no interest in the Soviet proposals on disarmament either. The representatives of the USSR were in favour of the parties at the conference binding themselves not to use atomic or hydrogen weapons, and calling upon other states to follow their example. In making this proposal the Soviet delegation stressed that the draft they put forward was based upon proposals advanced previously by the Western powers themselves.

But the other participants in the talks did not support the Soviet proposal. Their counter-proposals were concerned solely with control and inspection of existing weaponry and armed forces.

A proposal by Eisenhower contributed something new: it was that the USA and the USSR should exchange information on their armed forces and allow aerial photography of each other's territory.

This demarche by the Americans was clearly inspired by their desire for better intelligence—a better knowledge of the defensive capabilities of the USSR. And for that reason it was rejected by the Soviet side.

For Eden the President's proposal was an unpleasant

surprise. He was alarmed—might Washington and Moscow get together on this issue? An agreement on this point could open the way to Soviet-American collaboration in this particular sphere. And London would be left on the side-lines. Direct American-Soviet contacts, without Britain as the "honest broker", had been Churchill's and Eden's nightmare earlier on, in the years of the anti-Hitler coalition. How could one then play upon the contradictions between the USA and the USSR, if the two countries decided to settle them by bilateral negotiation?

"Here the President sprang a surprise," [is how] Eden expressed it later. What the American historian Fleming says on the same subject is this: "The President's proposal for mutual air inspection between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. had 'scared the British' half out of their wits' ... since it indicated in effect American-Russian cooperation."

In the discussions on contacts between East and West, the Soviet delegation expressed itself in favour of the development of economic, commercial, cultural and other links between the peoples, as an important contribution to lessening international tension.

The delegations of the USA, Britain and France supported, in words, the idea of extending economic links, but avoided bringing the discussion of these down to real terms. They did, however, show great interest in any opportunities that might be created for sending bourgeois propaganda material to the USSR.

During the last stage of the conference, there was talk between the Soviet and British delegates of arranging mutual visits of Heads of Government. The USSR representatives invited Eden to visit Moscow.

After the conference was concluded, it was possible to observe a desire to exaggerate its importance. There was much talk of "the spirit of Geneva". History witnesses that diplomats, not having achieved actual results, are often inclined to maintain that they have invigorated a "positive spirit". It has been noted that such a "spirit" shows a tendency to evaporate, rapidly and without trace.

In actual fact the results of the Geneva Summit meeting were negligible. Though it did for a time contribute somewhat towards detente, no agreement was reached on major international issues.

Eden and Macmillan drew one important conclusion from their meetings in Geneva with Soviet delegates. Summing

up the results of the conference later, Eden wrote: "The Geneva Conference taught some lessons... Each country present learnt that no country attending wanted war and each understood why." This convoluted formulation is of interest primarily because it shows that Eden did bring back from Geneva the conviction that the USSR wanted not war but peace.

By way of "selling" the effectiveness of the conference, Eden told the House of Commons: "Geneva has given this simple message to the whole world: it has reduced the dangers of war." In reality the dangers of war had in no way been reduced, as was to transpire only one year later. Eden was perfectly well aware of it even in the summer of 1955. But he needed to assure the British people that their Prime Minister had kept his promise of arranging a Summit meeting. Hence the exaggeratedly optimistic note in the assessment made of Geneva.

In terms of hard politics, the Geneva Conference had not been a success for Eden and his government. The British side had hoped to put the squeeze on the USSR and get its agreement to German unification on terms satisfactory to the plans and aims of the Western powers. This had not happened.

In Britain interest in the outcome of the Geneva Conference was further stimulated by Eden's announcement to the House of Commons that agreement had been reached in Geneva on a visit to Britain in the coming year by the Soviet leaders.

This visit was to take place in April 1956. At this moment in time Eden was in a thoroughly bad mood. He had dreamt for years of what he would do as Prime Minister, of how his time in office would contribute a brilliant page to the annals of British political history. For that dream to be realised, he had to achieve something notable. But everything was turning out to run counter to his dreams and hopes. Failures had dogged him from the very start of his term in office. First of all it had been economic troubles and political problems at home. But that might probably be counter-balanced by success abroad, in the field of foreign policy, where Eden was strongest. After all Winston Churchill had become a historic figure thanks to what he did in war and in foreign relations being no great expert in economic and home affairs, indeed indifferent to them. Eden had counted on the Geneva Conference to provide him with a great per-

sonal success, to give lustre to his name. But it had proved a very pale and mundane affair, and brought him no fresh popularity.

And Imperial affairs were proving bad, very bad indeed, for British ruling circles. In South-East Asia and in the Middle East the states which had recently thrown off British rule were going ahead in their fight for independence. It was natural that their efforts in this direction should cause them to turn towards the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries. From them they could get disinterested aid and support. But that ruined the colonialist and neo-colonialist plans of imperialism. British ruling circles demanded fast and effective action from their government. But what could that government do? British prestige in the developing countries fell rapidly.

The situation was extremely unfavourable, politically and psychologically, for the government and for Eden personally. The existing dissatisfaction with the government's "weakness" was known to Eden, and it depressed and irritated him. Then it suddenly overflowed the bounds of private conversation in governmental and business circles and got into the newspapers, even the Conservative newspapers, such as the *Daily Telegraph*. "The general malaise," writes Randolph Churchill, "which seemed to have fallen on the Government by the turn of the year led to severe criticism of Sir Anthony, and his colleagues, and most of the blame was put on Sir Anthony."

That was the situation, and the general atmosphere, when the Soviet leaders visited Britain. Feelings of dissatisfaction and annoyance with the USSR always grow stronger among the British bourgeoisie when it encounters difficulties, even when the Soviet Union has nothing whatever to do with them. That was the case on the occasion of this visit.

The Conservative Government's ill-will towards the USSR had been apparent even before the visit began. Eden was annoyed by the visit which was made by a Soviet delegation to India and Pakistan, and by Soviet statements of support for the newly independent countries, and by anti-colonialist items in the Soviet press, etc., etc. All this, he was to write later, "called in question the visit to Britain. Naturally I weighed all these considerations carefully and discussed them with my principal colleagues. It seemed to me that we had invited the Soviet leaders to Britain not because it suited them to come, but because it suited us to

receive them, and I thought, on balance, that the visit would be to our advantage."

These doubts and hesitations made themselves felt immediately. The British press found a pretext for anti-Soviet outbursts in the quite normal (in such cases) arrival in London, prior to the delegation's visit, of Soviet officials to discuss security arrangements with their British colleagues. The British side broke with all existing tradition in disregarding the requests made by the Soviet side, when drawing up the programme for the Soviet delegation during its stay in Britain.

The Foreign Office prepared an agenda for the talks to take place during the visit which even Eden considered was "too tightly packed with items for our purpose". Eden suggested that "the agenda should be framed in the most general terms". It was so framed.

The Soviet Government saw the hoped-for outcome of the London visit as a strengthening of links between the two countries, and a reduction in international tension. But the Eden Government intended to use the visit of the Soviet leaders as an ostentatious display of rapprochement with the Soviet Union, in order to strengthen the position of the Conservative Party within Britain. It further hoped to get the Soviet Union to give assurances that it would not give aid to the national liberation movement of the peoples. Eden notes that he proposed to say in negotiation that anti-colonialist statements of the USSR "seemed to have been deliberately calculated to cause tension and to do harm to Anglo-Soviet relations". The Conservatives also intended to get (or try to get) from the Soviet Union a unilateral undertaking not to supply arms to Egypt, against whom Britain and some other powers were already meditating military intervention.

The official talks took place in the Prime Minister's residence, in the Cabinet room. There was a sharp exchange of opinions concerning colonialism. The Soviet delegates stated firmly that the USSR had always supported and would continue to support the national liberation movement, and that it could not do other than criticise colonialism. That was a matter of principle. The Soviet delegation refused to give any undertaking not to assist Egypt, and proposed that an international agreement of broad scope should be concluded which would outlaw the supply of arms to any of the countries of the Middle East.

In Britain at this time there was a growing inclination to use force in this region. Eden said that the British would "fight for oil". The Soviet delegation replied that no arguments citing the "importance" of oil for Britain, or her "vital interests" in the Middle East, could justify Britain having recourse to arms in the region. The Soviet delegation also made concrete proposals—with the aim of thoroughly improving relations between the two countries—on a considerable increase in Anglo-Soviet trade. But the Eden Government rejected those proposals. It had to be understood that this meant London would persist, together with its allies, in operating an economic blockade of the USSR.

The talks brought no serious practical results. 'And the British side had not meant that they should. Its demands that the USSR should renege on the principle of proletarian internationalism in respect of the national liberation movement of the peoples showed that the British Government was not ready to work for better relations with the Soviet Union.

On April 30, 1956, Eden sent the members of his Cabinet a minute analysing the results of the talks with the Soviet representatives. "I do not believe," it said, "that the Russians have any plans at present for military aggression in the West." That is a remarkable conclusion set down in an official document.

So once again, as in Geneva, the Eden Government had no misgivings about Moscow's intentions. Its admissions here should be compared with the hysterical cries about the "Soviet threat" which have continued to emanate from London for decades since the events just described.

"Now that the Russian visit is over," said the minute referred to above, "it is necessary to review our policy. There are a number of points to be looked at. Our main weapons of resistance to Soviet encroachment have hitherto been military. But do they meet the needs of the present time?... Are we prepared with other weapons to meet the new challenge? This seems to me to be the major issue of foreign policy."

Since in the same document Eden had recognised that there was no military threat from the USSR, one may well ask what the "challenge" was, and the "Soviet encroachment" to which he alludes? The answer can be in no doubt. The "challenge" which London saw lay in the fact that the CPSU and the Soviet Government were confident that communism would triumph ultimately throughout the world. Eden himself says it: "Back at Number 10, I had to decide what

our policy should now be. The present Soviet rulers had as much confidence as their predecessors in the ultimate triumph of communism. They were unshakeably determined."

Eden was worried lest ordinary people, that had been misled by imperialist propaganda, might come to realise that there was in fact no threat of Soviet aggression. If they had, it would have destroyed the very basis of NATO. "As the menace of major war receded," ran Eden's meditations, "the existing basis of Western cohesion against Soviet encroachment might be weakened. We should need to adjust our policy with more speed if we were to maintain the solidarity of the free world to meet the new challenge from the Soviet Union." Thereafter came an important conclusion: "In foreign policy it looked as though we should lay more emphasis in future on economic and propaganda weapons and less on military strength."

This looks like a shift in British policy—a turning away from military means of opposing socialism in the direction of economic, political and ideological forms of struggle. But it did not mean that military means would be henceforth foresworn. It would be a mistake to think that this re-assessment of policy was evoked by the fact that Eden suddenly clearly understood that there existed no military threat to the West from the Soviet Union. He had always known that the "threat" was an invention of imperialist politicians and propagandists. Eden only acquired this sceptical attitude towards the use of military means in the struggle against communism after it had become clear to him that the socialist camp had effective means of defending itself.

Even after the Soviet delegates had departed from Britain and gone home, Eden still suffered some unpleasantnesses connected with their visit. Without warning it emerged, in a communique issued by the Admiralty, that on April 19 Commander Lionel Crabb, a frogman of the Royal Navy, had been diving in Portsmouth Harbour near the Soviet cruiser *Ordzhonikidze*, on which the Soviet delegation had arrived in Britain, and had perished. The question immediately arose—what had he been doing near the cruiser? There could be only one answer—it was a spying operation, involving the underwater parts of the cruiser.

The fatal accident to Crabb gave rise to an official enquiry. It elucidated that he had been staying at the Sallyport Hotel in Portsmouth. When attempts were made to inspect

the hotel's registration book, it appeared that a high-ranking police officer had torn out the page carrying Crabb's registration. The Secret Service was clearly trying to cover its traces.

The Crabb incident was incontrovertible evidence that hostile acts were being perpetrated against the Soviet Union at the time of the talks with the Soviet delegation. Members of Parliament, roused to indignation by this fact, not to mention the clumsiness of their own intelligence service, raised the matter in the House. The head of all British intelligence services is the Prime Minister, so any questions involving them are for him to answer. As a rule the answer is always the same: the Premier says that for security reasons no answer can be given.

Eden, however, broke with this tradition. He, after all, as political head of the intelligence services, was the one bearing responsibility for the Crabb affair. And this could mean that he had been guilty of duplicity during the talks with the Soviet delegation. Later he was to justify his surprising answer in Parliament by saying that doubts might have been cast on London's sincerity in the talks.

What Eden said in the House of Commons was this: "It would not be in the public interest to disclose the circumstances in which Commander Crabb is presumed to have met his death. While it is the practice for Ministers to accept responsibility I think it is necessary, in the special circumstances of the case, to make it clear that what was done was done without the authority or the knowledge of Her Majesty's Ministers. Appropriate disciplinary steps are being taken."

So the Prime Minister admitted that British Intelligence had taken unprecedented action involving a Soviet cruiser in Portsmouth Harbour at the very time when high-level talks with the Soviet delegation were in progress. It was a serious blow for Eden's reputation.

It so happened that Eden's term of office as Prime Minister coincided with the break-up of British colonial empire in the Middle East. And in trying to stem this irreversible process, Eden was making efforts that were foredoomed to failure. By the mid-20th century, the national liberation revolution was something that the peoples of that part of the world were bound to achieve. The time was ripe for it, the conditions for its success were there, both within the countries concerned and in the outside world, and British

colonialism's defeat was inevitable. It is true that in the first post-war decade the Middle East still remained a sphere of British influence, and in London they were fully determined to cling on to their positions at any price. While in India the British Government did not dare risk using armed force to preserve its empire in Asia, in the Middle East it was prepared to risk such action.

The prospects for the Arab peoples were favourable. Their national liberation movement, upheld on the flanks by the liberation struggle of the peoples of Cyprus and Iran, was rapidly growing and gathering strength. The London politicians proved unable to reach a correct assessment of the degree of maturity of the movement, and hence of the danger threatening them. A particularly favourable circumstance for the Arab peoples was the increased might and world influence of the Soviet Union and other socialist states—the natural, trusty allies of the liberation struggle.

The British Government manoeuvred as best it could. Realising that inequitable treaties between Britain and Arab states roused the people of those states to fury, it tried re-negotiating treaties—as in the case of Jordan—so as to make the grant of “independence” very conditional, and meantime maintain and build up their own British garrisons on Arab territory. But this manoeuvre did not give lasting or stable results.

Another idea was therefore produced in London—that of creating a multilateral “defence organisation” in the Middle East. Since the Arab countries would be participating in it on “equal” juridical terms with the British, the expectation was that they would agree to accept a British military contribution to the organisation, so that British bases and garrisons would remain where they were. This multilateral “defence organisation” was to protect British interests, and those of the local bourgeoisie and feudal lords, which were firmly tied to the British ascendancy, against the national liberation movement.

In order to exclude the possibility of the Arab nations being given the support of the socialist countries, the multilateral military-political organisation was to be set up under the flag of the fight against the communist threat. And lastly, this “defence organisation” would make the territories of its participants available for purposes hostile to the Soviet Union in conformity with the plans of NATO strategists.

An attempt to create a military organisation in the Middle East which would serve the interests of the imperialist states had been made as early as 1951. It failed. But when, four years later, an agreement on defence was signed, with the blessing of the British Government, between Turkey and Arab Iraq, it looked as though there might be a chance of bringing the old plan into operation. Britain promptly involved herself, signing a similar agreement with Iraq. When Iran and Pakistan also associated themselves with this grouping, Eden thought that the Baghdad Pact, thus created, would "grow into a NATO for the Middle East". But within Arab states it was clearly realised that the Baghdad Pact was, in effect, only an ingenious device for justifying the presence of British troops on their territories, and the general attitude to this imperialist subterfuge was negative.

It was not only Arab attitudes to the Baghdad Pact, but American ones also, which gave the British Government grounds for grave concern. The United States encouraged the conclusion of the Baghdad Pact (and from 1957 on took part in its activities), because it was directed against the Soviet Union and the national liberation movement. But this bloc was also intended to maintain British positions in the Arab world, whereas the American monopolies were trying to extend their own footholds in the Middle East, which could only be done by edging out the British. So the United States, despite urgent requests from London, refrained from becoming a fully-fledged member of the pact.

Conflicts of interest made themselves felt again in early 1956, at an Anglo-American meeting. Eden and the new Foreign Secretary, Selwyn Lloyd, had a three-day consultation with US leaders in Washington. The British were trying to agree a united Anglo-American policy for the Middle East. Nothing came of it. On February 2, 1956, the London *Evening Standard* wrote: "The Washington conference has failed to produce any result which could not have been procured through normal diplomatic channels. This was made abundantly plain by a pompous declaration and uninformative communique. When the statesmen and politicians can't think of anything else to say they always drag in God. Last night's declaration did it twice over, both in preamble and in peroration."

The British Government had hoped that after the 1954 agreement on withdrawal of British troops from the Suez

Canal zone, Egypt would support the plans for a military block in the Middle East. Thought in London proceeded via the old, often-tested concepts. How many times had Britain succeeded, by making concessions and casting sops to a nationalist bourgeoisie, in transforming it into a firm support for herself. Quite recently the same recipe had been followed with success in Jordan, a settlement having been reached with the ruling Hashimite dynasty. So if sensible care was taken, it should be possible to bring Egypt too within the embrace of "friendship".

At first it seemed as though that would indeed happen. The triumphant emergence of Nasser from the political struggles of spring 1954 promised the establishment of a strong government. Such a government was simpler and more reliable to deal with. French newspapers carried reports from Cairo to the effect that the Foreign Office probably considered Nasser's strong right arm a sufficient guarantee, in the absence of universal suffrage in Egypt, of future agreement. Advances were also made from the American side, in hopes of doing a deal with Egypt's leaders—a deal, of course, which would be to the advantage of the monopoly concerns, and directly contrary to the fundamental interests of the Egyptian people. In return for such an agreement the US Government was prepared to pay by sacrificing... British interests.

On October 19, 1954, in the Hall of the Pharaohs where the Egyptian Parliament met, at the feet of a black basalt statue of Rameses II, the Anglo-Egyptian agreement on the withdrawal of British troops was signed. After this formal act Anglo-Egyptian relations returned to a normal footing, which British diplomats took to be evidence that the Egyptian Government would be ready to cooperate with Britain and the USA.

But in London and Washington they were incapable of understanding that the revolution of national liberation in Egypt, and in the Arab world in general, had not reached its conclusion by the mid-fifties, and that its aims were quite incompatible with those of the Western powers. The part played by Britain and the USA in the creation of the Baghdad Pact showed that the governments of those countries were trying to restrain the national liberation movement and preserve their own domination over the Arab peoples. Realisation of this fact could not help but deepen the revolution in Egypt and accentuate its anti-British thrust.

The beginning of 1955 saw the announcement that the first link in the future Baghdad Pact had been created. The Egyptian Government faced a dilemma: was it to join this bloc as a junior, dependent partner with the Western powers, or was it to attempt to unite with all the Arab peoples in order to continue developing and deepening the liberation struggle. The Egyptian leaders chose the latter. And this decision brought naturally in its train an approach to those who were the allies of the peoples fighting for their social and national liberation.

In September 1955 the Soviet Union, Poland and Czechoslovakia signed an agreement on supply of arms to Egypt. The US Government demanded of the Cairo Government, in the form of an ultimatum, that it give up the acquisition of arms from socialist countries. In Downing Street they considered it wiser to refrain from issuing any ultimatum as yet.

In support of the Egyptian Government, the Soviet Government issued a statement that the USSR "adheres to the position that every state has a legal right to show concern for its own defence, and to purchase arms for defence purposes from other states on ordinary commercial terms, and no foreign state has any right to interfere in this and make any unilateral objections infringing the rights and interests of other states". Thus Egypt's dependence in defence matters on Britain and the USA was overcome.

Egypt's choice of the way forward reduced the politicians in London to helpless fury. The Egyptian action was a heavy blow to Eden's Cabinet and to the Prime Minister himself. Eden conceived a bitter hatred of Nasser, considering that the latter had tricked him personally.

Strange as it may seem, many events in the Middle East took London by surprise, in spite of the fact that British colonial administrators, diplomats and secret agents had spent long years in the area. Another unexpected blow was the situation in Jordan, which Downing Street had formerly been quite happy with. That country was ruled by the twenty-year-old King Hussein, who had been brought up and educated in England; his troops were commanded by British generals and colonels, and there were over 100,000 British troops based in Jordan. In the late forties, Britain had helped the rulers of Jordan to annex part of Palestine. And lastly, Jordan was bound to Britain by treaties of alliance, and her king received British subsidies.

But despite all that, all attempts to draw Jordan into the Baghdad Pact failed. The ruling circles of Jordan were prepared to do the will of London, but the mass of the people voiced their protests quite categorically. The Eden Government used force against them—and was defeated.

Events moved rapidly. At the end of November 1955 Macmillan arrived in the Middle East, and application of the Macmillan Plan began; the general idea of this was to draw Jordan into the Baghdad Pact gradually, starting with economic agreements between Jordan and the pact's members.

This plan failed, and London decided to try thumping the table. Field-Marshal Templer, Chief of the Imperial Staff, arrived in Jordan. He succeeded in getting the government of Jordan—which had a neutralist approach—sacked, and a new Cabinet appointed, composed of men prepared to see Jordan drawn into the Baghdad Pact. There was rejoicing in London, but not for long. The people's indignation swept the new government from office within five days. Field-Marshal Templer was obliged to leave Jordan. One might think that by then British statesmen should have grasped that the days of using force were past. But no—such minds learn only with difficulty.

The British Government began to put pressure upon the King of Jordan, treating him with contempt and trying to frighten him. At the same time General Glubb (an Englishman commanding an Arab Legion within Jordan) began a campaign of terror against the mass of the people. Reinforcements were moved to Cyprus with the clear intention of their being used in Jordan. The British newspapers said that the anti-British disturbances in Jordan were the immediate cause of the troop movements.

The press also occupied itself with a search for the "culprits". Of course the journalists never mentioned the realities of the matter—that the government's failures in the Middle East were the result of a faulty policy, that that policy was long outdated and under modern conditions could not help but fail. They were looking for "reasons" in terms of personalities. Some blamed Macmillan, others Field-Marshal Templer, and yet others—Anthony Eden.

Early in March 1956 King Hussein, under pressure from his people, dismissed Glubb from his post of commander of the Arab Legion and told him to leave within two hours. Other British officers were dismissed at the same time. In

response to these acts, the British press demanded that force be used to restore British prestige in Jordan and the Middle East.

Julian Amery, one of the most reactionary of Conservatives, wrote a letter to *The Times*, which was printed on March 5, saying that the events in Jordan were the consequence of British retreats from Palestine, Abadan, the Sudan and the Suez Canal Zone. He demanded that such retreats should cease and called on the government "to promote a rescue operation to save Britain from disaster in the Middle East". This was becoming more and more the prevailing mood among Conservative MPs.

On March 7 there was a debate in the House of Commons on the Middle Eastern situation. Waterhouse, leader of the "Suez group", declared: "Britain is still powerful and on occasion our strength must be used." Eden, according to Randolph Churchill, "hesitated and stumbled" in making his speech. "I must tell the House bluntly," said the Prime Minister, "that I am not in a position to announce tonight, in respect of immediate policy for Jordan, definite lines of policy which are inevitably to be followed." Eden gave lack of information as the reason for this inability to state policy.

The Prime Minister was in a very awkward corner. It was clear that the Conservative Party was waiting for him to say that Britain would immediately restore her positions in Jordan by forcible means. But Eden was not sure that such action would succeed. And Field-Marshal Glubb himself, who had by then arrived in London, considered that harsh measures against Jordan would have undesirable consequences.

In summing up this Parliamentary debate on the Middle East, Randolph Churchill writes: "As far as Sir Anthony was concerned the debate marked the beginning of the disintegration of the personality and character that the public thought him to possess."

Eden's conduct in the debate did not please the hot heads in the Conservative Party. Press reports said that "Sir Anthony suffered a blow to his prestige that was clearly reflected in the silent, devastated ranks on the Conservative benches behind him. Inevitably, these episodes start one asking the question 'How long can Eden go on for?'... Events may save Sir Anthony, but it is hard to avoid the feeling that the cards are mounting and that, if the year goes on as it

has begun, it will not be Sir Anthony Eden but Mr. Harold Macmillan who reigns in Downing Street in 1957." An accurate prophecy! It was to happen, just as foretold.

2 The mid-1950s were marked by two major acts of aggression, intended by imperialist politicians to ensure the continuation of colonialism, strike at the cause of freedom and independence of the peoples, break the unity of the countries of the socialist camp and weaken the world socialist system. Britain, France and Israel, seeking to protect their imperialist interests in the Middle East, unleashed armed aggression against Egypt. At the same time, imperialist circles provoked a counter-revolutionary mutiny in Hungary. These were links in the same chain...

Having got rid of the British occupation, the Egyptian Government planned a series of measures designed to eliminate the disastrous effects of Britain's colonialist ascendancy, to develop the national economy, and to raise the living standards of the people. The success of this programme depended primarily on the building of the Aswan High Dam on the river Nile; it was to make possible an extension of the areas sown to crops, and to produce power for industrial development. Large-scale capital investment was needed for the building of the dam, and Egypt hoped to obtain about 270 million dollars through the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, from Britain and the USA. But both those countries were prepared to arrange loans only on political conditions unacceptable to Egypt. There was nothing new in this, in principle. Such conditions are usually set when imperialist countries give "aid" to developing countries. An English writer, Hugh Thomas, says that "aid to underdeveloped countries had been openly used by the West as an instrument of policy". And when Egypt refused to accept the conditions laid down, the British and US Governments withdrew their offers of loans for the construction of the Aswan High Dam.

On July 26, 1956, the Egyptian Government announced the nationalisation of the Anglo-French Universal Suez Canal Company, which controlled the Suez Canal, although this ran through Egyptian territory. Juridically this was an entirely justified act, and it was done in the interests of the Egyptian people and of all the Arab peoples. The terms of the concession under which the company operated stated it to be Egyptian, subject to local jurisdiction, that it must be run according to the laws and customs of Egypt,

and that in matters of the Suez Canal's exploitation it must act in the name of the Egyptian Government.

As everyone knows, the canal was built by Egyptian blood and sweat. Its construction was begun in 1859, and it was all done by manual labour. The workers were compulsorily recruited from the Egyptian fellahin. Each month there had to be 60,000 workers on the job, and this was an incredible burden for the Egyptians, who at that period numbered only four million. About 120,000 Egyptians perished in the course of the canal's construction, from overwork and disease. Egypt paid out 450 million francs for the building of the canal. And that sum does not include the labour contributed, or the value of the land taken over.

In 1875 the British Government purchased from the then ruler of Egypt all the shares which he held in the Suez Canal Company. Egypt was finally pushed out entirely from the running of the canal and from enjoyment of the profits it brought in. Egypt's national heritage was taken over by the colonialists.

In Eden's Memoirs the chapter dealing with [the nationalisation of the Suez Canal is headed "Theft". It would be wrong to think that the writer chose this chapter heading in a fruitless attempt to give a literary tone to a historical event, or that it is merely the result of his own emotional state after being unsuccessfully involved in that event. It expresses Eden's convictions, his world outlook; not only his, but the world outlook of Britain's ruling circles. This is the world outlook which provides the basis for neo-colonialism, and which furnished "moral justification" for the British Government when it launched an armed attack on Egypt in 1956. The fact that British colonisers in the 19th century had taken away Egypt's property and its independence strikes British politicians and many historians as something quite natural and justified. But when the people of Egypt declared its intention of re-assuming its rights over that which had been taken from it, at once the cry of "Theft!" went up in London. Such is the ideology and morality of the imperialists, and they are a vital element in international relations.

The British Government was taken unawares by Egypt's action, although if it had paid more careful attention to what Egyptian statesmen had been saying, and had had a better understanding of the processes taking place in Egypt, it might have been able to read the signs in good time.

Eden got the news of the nationalisation while he was at an official dinner, given by him on July 26 in honour of guests from Iraq recently arrived in London—King Feisal and Prime Minister Nuri Said, who was a doughty defender of British interests in Iraq. Nuri Said at once advised Eden: "Hit him, hit him hard and hit him now." Meaning Nasser. Hastily getting rid of other guests such as Gaitskell and Shawcross of the Labour Party, Eden immediately called together his Ministers, the Chiefs of Staff, likewise the French Ambassador and a Counsellor from the US Embassy. Nuri Said afterwards stated that Eden was infuriated to the highest degree. It was probably at that moment that he conceived the idea that the Egyptian Government had to be removed. If it could be done by economic and political pressure, well and good; if not, then force would have to be used.

The next day Eden sent a telegram to Eisenhower which said: "This morning I have reviewed the whole position with my Cabinet colleagues and Chiefs of Staff. We are all agreed that we cannot afford to allow Nasser to seize control of the canal... We should not allow ourselves to become involved in legal quibbles about the rights of the Egyptian Government to nationalize *what is technically an Egyptian company* (my italics—V. T.)... As we see it we are unlikely to attain our objective by economic pressures alone... We ought in the first instance to bring the maximum political pressure to bear on Egypt... My colleagues and I are convinced that we must be ready, in the last resort, to use force to bring Nasser to his senses. For our part we are prepared to do so. I have this morning instructed our Chiefs of Staff to prepare a military plan accordingly."

Such prompt efficiency bears witness to the complete unity and firm determination prevailing at this juncture within the British Government. It all looks rather as though in London they had only been waiting for a suitable excuse in order to overwhelm Egypt with all Britain's economic, political and military might, in order to restore British positions in that country and in the entire Arab world.

Economic pressures were at once brought to bear on Egypt, and the press began to prepare the British people for the launching of an armed attack upon it. By July 28 *The Times* was headlining "Time for Decision". Further down it said: "The seizure is an act of international brigandage... If ... Nasser can demonstrate that he can with im-

punish appropriate assets and destroy Western interests, others are certain sooner or later to profit by that lesson. The oilfields of the Middle East, on which Britain's standard of living so much depends, are mainly in the territories of friendly Middle Eastern Governments. But in the shifting sands of Arab politics extremists in every country would soon be pressing to follow Egypt's lead, if it were seen to be successful."

It seemed that public opinion was following where these propagandist calls led, seeing that not only Conservative but Labour Members of Parliament also were speaking in favour of applying firm measures to Egypt. The Labour leader, Hugh Gaitskell, came out on the 27th of July in support of the government, when speaking in the House of Commons, and sharply condemned Egypt, calling the nationalisation of the Suez Canal "a high-handed and totally unjustifiable step". In another speech, on August 2, Gaitskell admitted that armed force might be used against Egypt. Even so-called "left" Labour people lined up behind the Eden Government. At least their acknowledged leader, Aneurin Bevan, remarked to Amery, the most extreme supporter of military action: "This proves you were right."

Here too the Prime Minister made yet another mistake. He was sure that the Labour Opposition was on his side. This was a very important point. British history teaches that a government dare not enter into a war unless it has the support of the Opposition. Eden should have taken into account possible changes in Labour's attitude in the future. In fact a change did take place, and quite quickly.

In the international arena, two diametrically opposed lines immediately emerged. The Soviet Union and the other socialist countries came out firmly on the side of Egypt. The USSR Government made an official declaration that it "considers the decision of the Egyptian Government on the nationalisation of the Suez Canal an entirely legitimate act, ensuing from Egypt's sovereign rights". The majority of the Afro-Asian states declared their support for Egypt. Numerous organisations representing public opinion raised their voices in support of this just cause.

This could not but affect the attitude of the British people. Very soon the chauvinist propaganda largely lost its effectiveness. Ordinary people in Britain began to realise that caution was needed or their country would find itself in a very awkward situation. This mood spread among rank-

and-file Labour supporters. Under pressure from them, the party bosses began to waver. Even as early as August 13, the Labour Shadow Cabinet resolved that the nationalisation of the Suez Canal did not give grounds for the use of force against Egypt. It was a remarkable turn-around, and in ignoring it, Eden's Cabinet committed another grave error.

Quite another line was taken by the British Conservatives, and by the French and US Governments, which joined with Eden's Cabinet in applying economic pressure on Egypt. These countries organised a series of international meetings with the object of bringing international political pressure to bear upon troublesome Cairo, and forcing it to hand over the Suez Canal to the imperialists. The second object of these manoeuvres was to gain time for the build-up needed prior to an armed attack upon Egypt.

On an initiative coming from Britain, France and the USA, a 22-power conference met in London in August 1956; its aim was supposed to be, as its initiators saw it, the establishment of a so-called international board of management for the Suez Canal. To persuade the Egyptian Government to accept this and abandon nationalisation, the Australian Prime Minister, Menzies, was sent to Cairo; his mission was unsuccessful, though.

In September Dulles produced a proposal for the formation of a Suez Canal Users' Association, in which the USA, Britain and France would take part. The association would have had the right to coordinate the passage of shipping through the Suez Canal, and the levy of fees for its use. It was a feebly disguised plan for seizure of the canal by the imperialist powers. A new conference, this time with 18 countries taking part, accepted this American plan after some hesitation, but Egypt rejected it.

The Labour leaders were becoming more and more insistent that they could not support military action against Egypt unless it had the sanction of the United Nations. So the British Government, which had at the start no intention of bringing UNO into the affair, decided it would be as well to do so. This application to the United Nations Organisation would also come in useful later, by way of justification to the people of armed action being taken: one could say that since appealing to UNO had had no result, it was necessary to use force to see "justice" done.

Britain and France lodged a complaint against Egypt with

the Security Council, asking it to call upon Egypt to cooperate with the Canal Users' Association. The USSR used its right of veto to prevent such a resolution being passed.

Simultaneously with these official international acts, an alliance was being formed, in deepest secrecy, between Britain, France and Israel, and a military attack upon Egypt urgently prepared. The French Government was eager for such action, and even hurried on the preparations. Relations between Paris and the Arab nations were in a hopeless state anyway, so France had nothing to lose. The politicians of the Quai d'Orsay hoped that armed intervention against Egypt would not only restore French "rights" over the Suez Canal, but lead to a change of regime in Cairo and so to a cessation of Egyptian assistance to the people of Algeria, then in active struggle against French colonial rule.

By this time Guy Mollet's Government had established close cooperation with Israel, French arms were pouring into that country, and Paris found it easy to reach agreement with Tel Aviv on a joint attack upon Egypt. The conflict over the Suez Canal was seen by Israeli leaders as a heaven-sent opportunity for furthering their own territorial expansion at Egypt's expense.

Eden's Cabinet too wanted to bring Israel in as an ally, but unlike the French they had to operate in utter secrecy. The point was that British plans included the replacement of Nasser's Government by a pro-British clique which, together with Nuri Said, would have formed the nucleus of a group of other Arab states that Britain could then direct in her own interests. So it was essential not to let the Arabs know that London was lining up with Israel, since the latter had been at war with the Arabs since 1948.

The deal between the three aggressors was arranged in the main by France, but at the very final stage the British had to play their part too. On October 16 Eden and Selwyn Lloyd met the French leaders, Mollet and Pineau. A plan for the attack upon Egypt, known as Musketeer II, was discussed in detail and passed. The next day, on return to London, Eden said that Britain and France had agreed to form the Canal Users' Association. At the same time he stressed his non-connection with Israel's actions: "I do not want to know about Israel." The British Prime Minister was always more than generous when it came to false statements.

A week later, on October 24, Selwyn Lloyd and Patrick Dean met Mollet and Pineau and Israeli leaders—Ben Gurion, the Prime Minister, and Defence Minister, Moshe Dayan. This meeting finalised the deal between the three aggressors.

The Eden Government's insistent determination to pretend that it had nothing to do with Israel's attack on Egypt moved Pineau to comment, later: "I have' been greatly struck by Britain's first priority, apparently, being to justify its actions to the Arabs and to world public opinion." He also stated that the plan of attack was set out in a special document which was signed by him, Pineau, for France, by Ben Gurion for Israel, and by Patrick Dean for Britain. This was in a villa at Sevres.

It is interesting that the arguments about just what agreement was reached between the British and Israeli Governments in October 1956 rumbled on many years later. The British side maintained stubborn silence as to there having been any agreement at all. An interview with Ben Gurion in the *Listener* shows that he was extremely angered by the attempts of Eden and his colleagues to disavow any agreement with Israel. Ben Gurion said that since "Eden didn't behave like a gentleman" he himself did not feel bound to keep silence; he had four volumes of materials on the matter which would be published "when they will not be alive—Eden, Selwyn Lloyd and the others".

The upshot of the agreement reached between the official representatives of Britain, France and Israel in the latter half of October 1956 was that the bloc of aggressors took its final shape.

Feverish military preparations were in progress at the same time. A joint Anglo-French planning team was set up, which worked under the Thames in old Second World War secret apartments. It was agreed that overall command of the invasion of Egypt should go to General Keightley, commander-in-chief of British forces in the Middle East. His next in command was to be a Frenchman—Vice-Admiral Barjot.

Providing for the invasion militarily proved unexpectedly difficult, despite the fact that, within the framework of NATO, both countries had advanced substantially on the road of the arms race and had spent enormous sums on it. As Hugh Thomas notes: "Britain's defence arrangements were geared either to all-out nuclear war against Russia

or to counter-insurgency in colonies; almost no provision existed for limited or conventional war of the old sort." And the attack upon Egypt was to be just such a "conventional war of the old sort". So the staff officers had to do a lot of improvising.

Invasion preparations were complicated by the fact that there were no suitable bases near Egypt where forces could be concentrated. Cyprus was the nearest, but the British bases there were insufficient for the requirements of the operation as planned. So many aircraft and ships had to be based on Malta.

It had been agreed that the British should provide the major part of the forces required: medium and light bomber planes, fighter planes, 50,000 men, and over 100 warships. The French contributed 30 ships and 30,000 men. There were seven aircraft-carriers—five British and two French. Operation headquarters was on Cyprus.

As the plan agreed by the three governments provided, Israel began military action against Egypt at 9 p.m., on October 29, 1956. The attack was spearheaded against the Sinai Peninsula and the Suez Canal. Nineteen hours later, at 4.30 p.m., on October 30, the British and French Governments presented Egypt with an ultimatum, that she should within 12 hours cease all military action by land, sea or air, withdraw all armed forces to a distance of 10 miles from the Suez Canal, and agree to the occupation by British and French forces of key points at Port Said, Ismailia and Suez. Britain and France threatened Egypt with armed intervention, if these demands were not fulfilled. The ultimatum was also officially sent to Israel. This hypocritical act was meant to show the aggressors in the light of impartial third parties, treating Egypt and Israel on the same footing, and inspired solely by the desire to keep the peace.

Since Israeli forces had already advanced 160 miles into Egyptian territory, this ultimatum legitimised the seizure of that territory. Indeed, by demanding that the belligerents withdraw to positions 10 miles from the Suez Canal, Britain and France were, as it were, inviting Israel to advance another 120 miles. The absurdity of the Eden and Mollet governments' pretensions to "impartiality" is thus revealed as soon as the text of the ultimatum is studied.

The British Government certainly made a bad mistake in thus associating itself with Israel. In spite of all their attempts to conceal it, the Arab states realised quite clearly

that they were under attack by two foes: one was trying to restore its old colonial domination, and the other was encroaching upon Arab territory. This was a spur to Arab unity and to their resistance to aggression.

On October 30 the Egyptian Government rejected the Anglo-French ultimatum and declared general mobilisation. The next day the term laid down in the ultimatum expired, and the Eden Government instructed General Keightley to commence military action against Egypt. On the evening of October 31 British bombers from Cyprus and Malta attacked Egyptian airfields. These air attacks went on for five days, then on November 5 British and French troop landings were made at Port Said.

Eden and his colleagues had naively imagined that as soon as the first bombs fell and the first troops landed, the Egyptian people would immediately overthrow their government and meekly accept a puppet government named by the aggressors. This supposition explains the great attention that was paid to preparing psychological warfare against the Egyptians. A special headquarters was set up for this purpose, on Cyprus, under the command of Brigadier Fergusson. It mounted a "radio attack", and deluged Egyptian towns with millions of leaflets with the call to depose "the tyrant Nasser". But the people of Egypt understood what the aggressors wanted to impose upon them and serried ranks around their government, supporting its military efforts. The Egyptian High Command had an army of about 100,000 at its disposal. A quarter of this number were in Sinai, and as there were fears that they might be surrounded, they were ordered to withdraw beyond the Canal.

On November 6 British and French units occupied Port Said. The same day they pressed on to the south, towards Ismailia and Suez, and had advanced 23 miles by evening. But at this moment General Keightley received orders from London to cease fire. The Soviet historian A. M. Golodov, in his study of the Suez crisis, writes that "by the evening of November 6 Egypt was undoubtedly in a very difficult situation. The battle in the air, the actions in the Sinai and at Port Said had all been lost. The Egyptians were preparing for what might, at the worst, be general partisan warfare, and hundreds of thousands of rifles were distributed to the population. But at this moment the hand of the aggressor was stayed." Who, then, stayed it?

English, and to a large extent American, memoirs and

historiography keep firmly to presenting the line that the military action by Britain and France did not succeed because it was opposed by the United States. This version is widely disseminated, for one thing, because there is no desire in London to admit the decisive contribution made by the Soviet Union to the re-establishment of peace in the Middle East. For admission of the true part played by the USSR at that difficult moment for the Arab countries would rob of all force the ideas so assiduously peddled in the West of the USSR's "perfidious" designs against the Arabs, of its "aggressive intentions" in the region, etc., etc. And this would undermine imperialism's positions in the ideological struggle against the USSR.

For another thing, the version ascribing the role of benefactor to the United States during the war of 1956 suits American ruling circles very nicely, since it shows them as a friend to the Arabs. Which is useful, bearing in mind the US interest in Middle Eastern oil, not to mention other, political and strategic, interests.

The facts tell another story. During the period of the Suez conflict the Soviet Government was active and determined in its defence of Egypt's right for its independence. It made a series of attempts to enlist UNO to counter aggression. Immediately following the Israeli attack, before the British and French incursion had even started, the Soviet Government addressed the UN Security Council with the proposal to pass a resolution demanding cessation of hostilities and the withdrawal of Israeli troops. When the resolution was voted on, the USA abstained, Britain and France used the veto, and the resolution was not adopted.

On November 2 an emergency session of the UN General Assembly passed, by an overwhelming majority, a resolution demanding that the three aggressor countries cease military action and withdraw their troops from Egyptian territory. The aggressors ignored it.

Then the Soviet Government took a decisive step. On November 5 it sent Britain, France and Israel the demand that they immediately stop the war against Egypt, warning that its continuation might have dangerous consequences. The message which the head of the Soviet Government sent to Eden said: "What would be the situation of Britain, if she were attacked by stronger states with all forms of modern destructive weaponry at their disposal? At the present time such states might send against Britain's shores not fleets of

ships or aircraft, but other devices using, for example, rocket technology... Deeply concerned as we are by the development of events in the Middle East, and being guided by the interests of preserving universal peace, we consider that the British Government must hearken to the voice of reason and stop the war in Egypt. We address ourselves to you, to Parliament, to the Labour Party, to the trades unions, to the people of Britain: stop armed aggression, call an end to the bloodshed. The war in Egypt may spread to other countries and turn into a third world war." And so that there should be no doubt remaining of the Soviet Union's firm resolve, the message concluded: "We are fully determined to use force to crush the aggressors and to restore peace in the Middle East."

The Foreign Minister of the USSR simultaneously despatched a telegram to the Chairman of the UN Security Council proposing that it should call upon Britain, France and Israel to cease military operations within 12 hours, and to withdraw the invading troops from Egyptian territory within three days. The USSR offered to give Egypt armed and other assistance if Britain, France and Israel did not heed the demand of the Security Council.

The Soviet Government also addressed President Eisenhower, proposing that the USA and the USSR should use the military force of the two countries to halt aggression. The United States rejected the proposal.

On the morning of November 6 the message from the head of the Soviet Government was published in the British press. In London they realised that they were playing with fire. Sobriety ensued. And at once dissension broke out among the country's leading circles. It is ever thus when a government suffers a crushing defeat. A meeting of the Cabinet revealed a split within it. Eight of its members threatened to resign unless the war was brought to an end. And the government took the decision to halt military operations without even consulting the Chiefs of Staff. There was no time to do so, and no point in doing so, since the decision had been taken under the pressure of political factors. At midday Eden rang Mollet, presented him with the *fait accompli*, and rang off.

Only 22 hours had passed since the Ambassadors of the USSR in London and in Paris had handed the Soviet Government's messages to Eden and Mollet, and the war was ended. In December the foreign troops left Egyptian soil. It was

the heaviest of defeats for British and French imperialism.

Why did it happen? First and foremost because Eden and his colleagues miscalculated. They left out of account a most important factor determining the development of international relations at the time, the new balance of forces in the world, produced by the crisis of the imperialist system on the one hand, and the continued strengthening of the world socialist system on the other.

Such is the truth. The US Ambassador to France, speaking on the radio then, said that the Soviet intervening had been decisive. Many historians in the Western world have come to the same conclusion.

One naturally asks what the position of the USA really was at the time of the Suez crisis? Eisenhower's Government, knowing that the aggression perpetrated against Egypt was odious in the extreme to public opinion throughout the world and was doomed to failure, had recourse to a crafty and two-faced line of conduct. As the collectively written *Soviet Foreign Policy* notes: the American Government "disassociated itself verbally from its NATO allies, Britain and France. But as regards deeds, it continued to supply Britain and France with oil, and made a loan of 500 million dollars available to Britain".

The British thesis, that Washington opposed London, is based solely on the fact that the American representatives at the United Nations either voted differently from Britain, or abstained, when the Suez problem was under discussion. Since the Americans did not associate themselves with those whose assessment of the aggression against Egypt was accurate and true to principle, it might perhaps be truer to say that the USA "failed to support", rather than opposed. Britain at the United Nations. They took up a position of neutrality and gave no military support either to the three aggressor countries in the Suez war.

This position on the part of Washington has to be seen in the light of a number of relevant facts. Firstly, the USA gave Britain, as its NATO ally, all possible political support. The American Government consistently rejected all the Soviet proposals which, if acted upon, would have called the aggressors to order. It actively supported British plans, and advanced plans of its own, intended to wreck the nationalisation of the Suez Canal and keep its management in Western hands. The USA knew, as the whole world knew, of the preparations for a military attack upon Egypt, and

did nothing to stop that attack being made. British assertions that while hostilities were in progress the Americans "sank" the pound sterling are unfounded. It was Eden's Government itself that sank the pound by engaging in a hopeless venture. Britain's currency was shaken because international financial circles understood at once that the Middle East war would end badly for Britain, and would consequently weaken the position of the pound. It was a normal, so to speak, reaction by the financial world to the troubled situation into which Eden's Government had plunged the country.

Secondly, there are some grounds for believing that the independent action which Britain undertook in the Middle East was intended to be an assertion of Britain's independence in her policy from the US in this area, something that would show Washington what London could do. It was a matter of raising Britain's status in the Anglo-American bloc and within NATO. And yearnings for independence of that sort were hardly likely to appeal to the United States.

Thirdly, any prospect of the operation started by London and Paris succeeding could hardly please the Americans, since it would have meant a radical strengthening of British positions in the Middle East. And the aim of American policy was just the reverse—to replace British influence by American influence. These considerations meant that objectively the USA had an interest in the failure of the Eden Government's enterprise.

Fourthly, for the same reasons the US Government had no wish whatsoever to quarrel with the Arabs, and was very wary of making any move which would evoke unfavourable reactions in the Arab world.

Fifthly, they could hardly expect in Downing Street that they would get any active American support in their war against Arabs, for the simple reason that they never asked for it. They were convinced that they could manage on their own. Eden merely informed Eisenhower of decisions when they were taken, and that in very general terms.

Sixthly, in making a military attack upon Egypt one odd week before the Presidential elections were due to start in the United States, Eden undoubtedly had it in mind to carry the operation through at a time when the President would have his hands tied by the electoral campaign. This is additional evidence of there having been no desire in London to make sure of American support.

And lastly, the US Government could not pass up the chance to call Eden to heel and so get their own back for what had happened in 1954. At that time he had repeatedly made light of American opinions and wishes on major international issues. He had disregarded Dulles at the Berlin Conference of Foreign Ministers. He, Eden, had wrecked American plans to "internationalise" the war in Vietnam. He had cut right across Dulles' line at the Geneva Conference, coming out in favour of ending the war in Indochina. In late 1954 Eden had attempted to take over from the USA the leading role in arranging the agreements whereby West Germany would be remilitarised. In the light of all that, one can understand Eisenhower and Dulles not wanting to hasten to Eden's aid in 1956, but preferring to make use of his troubles to their own advantage. The ratio of power within the Anglo-American alliance was such that the British Government was in no position to claim the independence it coveted. So Washington let it know that was so, as and when occasion arose.

Defeat in the 1956 war brought catastrophic consequences for the ruling circles of Britain. The cost in lives lost in action was minimal, if official data can be trusted; they give the number of dead as 22. But the economic loss was very great indeed. Eden, who obviously had an interest in making the figure as small as possible, gave the cost as £100 million. We feel that the calculations made by the Labour Party's research section three years later, when many things were much clearer, may be more accurate. It put the cost at £328 million. This includes additional expenditure on the army, navy and air force; the value of the installations and equipment of the lost military base on the Suez Canal (Egypt annulled the 1954 treaty under which Britain had been accounted the owner of this property); the loss borne by the British oil companies; losses through interruption of trade with Egypt; etc. To that one should add also the value of the British banks and other firms in Egypt which were nationalised, and for which only limited compensation was paid.

But out of all comparison with even these figures was the political cost to Britain. Harold Nicolson, a man of Conservative convictions and a keen student of international relations, wrote a letter to his wife (so in terms not intended for publication) on November 7, 1956, still in the heat of the moment, in which he said: "Well! That really is a fiasco!"

I experienced shameful relief when I heard of the cease-fire... Eden has failed all along the line. The Canal will now be blocked for weeks; Nasser is regarded as a hero and a martyr; our oil-supplies will be cut for two months at least; we have shown that we have not a friend in the world; our reputation is tarnished; and in the end, at the first serious threat from the Soviet Union, we have had to climb down. It is about the worst fiasco in history, and my deep prayer is that it will now cease and we shall be able to hide our shame in silence."

The collapse of the intervention in Egypt not only finished British influence in that country for good and all, it also offered extensive opportunities for improving the national independence of all the Arab states.

The British Government had underestimated the strength of the national liberation movement in the Middle East, and had made a bad mistake in consequence. British influence in the region fell abruptly.

Eden's Suez adventure caused great tension within the British Commonwealth. Its newer members took up a stance hostile to Britain, and the older ones too refused to support her.

Anglo-French relations also suffered. On the eve of the intervention, indeed, the old "Entente Cordiale" had come to life again it seemed. But when a game is lost, partners always fall out. The rift which became evident in relations between the two countries after their joint fiasco in the Middle East took a long time to heal. It was felt particularly strongly while General de Gaulle remained in power.

The Suez adventure caused even greater discord in Anglo-American relations. Eden, who was considered pro-American, had no understanding of the objective nature and role of inter-imperialist contradictions. He therefore considered that actions on the part of the Americans which London found undesirable must be inspired by personal antipathy towards Britain in this or that individual. This time he explained away the US attitude as being due to ill-will on the part of Dulles. British historiography had long gone on presenting the view that had it not been for Dulles, the "evil genius", Eisenhower might have behaved differently. Which is clearly a misapprehension.

While London reacted to French dissatisfaction over their joint venture of 1956 by loftily ignoring it, for a time at least (which they very soon came to regret), in the case of

the USA the British Government started to make it a rule, as from the time immediately following the Suez war, not to initiate political or military action of any importance without first getting Washington's approval. "The British have never since ventured on a foreign policy independent of the USA," writes Hugh Thomas. In this connection there was soon formulated and approved by both sides the principle of "interdependence". British ruling circles, seeing, in the light of Suez, their own weakness in the modern world, looked to find supplementary strength in closer alliance and cooperation with the USA. But in view of the difference in power between the two partners, the development of this trend in relations between them could hardly fail to bring in its train a greater degree of British dependence on the United States. The proclamation of "interdependence" had to be made willy-nilly, and it was done with feelings of great bitterness in British ruling circles.

After the Suez war dissatisfaction with the American attitude was very strong in the Conservative Party. Matters went so far as the tabling of an anti-American motion in the House of Commons by 127 Conservative Members. The motion censured the USA for having, by its actions, placed the Atlantic alliance in grave peril.

As regards the USSR, no words can describe the wave of hatred which broke out towards it in reactionary circles. The Soviet Union's support of the Arabs' just struggle produced an intensive anti-Soviet propaganda campaign in Britain, contributed to by members of the government, and by Parliament, and by the press and other mass media.

The failure of the military intervention in Egypt seriously damaged the authority of the Conservative Party within Britain. In the ranks of the big bourgeoisie they were dissatisfied with the Conservatives because they had proved unable to take such action with success, because they were not firm, determined and strong enough to do it.

While among the mass of ordinary people anger with the Conservatives flared because they had launched aggression against Egypt, starting a war which had very nearly spread, from being a local conflict, into a major war. The people of Britain understood that the Eden Government, by starting their Middle Eastern venture, had drawn down upon Britain the condemnation of all honest-minded people. The military attack on Egypt finally freed public opinion of its

false picture of Eden as a peace-loving statesman and exhibited his true face.

The British were particularly indignant because during the Suez crisis the government had lied to the people and misled Parliament. This offended against the "purity" of British democracy, in which the British take such pride and which they so wearisomely insist on setting up as the example the whole world ought to follow.

Harold Nicolson was in the thick of events, and his assessments, noted in his diary, i.e. for himself alone, are therefore particularly valuable as an indication of the state of feeling in Britain at that time. Nicolson described the attack on Egypt as criminal. On November 2, apropos of possible success in the Suez fighting he remarked: "Success does not render a dirty trick any less dirty."

On November 3 Nicolson recorded: "We listen to the Prime Minister on television. It is a dishonest ... performance." On November 4 he talked to his son Nigel, who was then in London. The young Conservative told his father that he was "disgusted by the hypocrisy of Eden's broadcast".

Time passed, but Nicolson's indignation continued: "What is offensive to a decent Tory mind is that he [Eden] has placed them in a false position by obliging them to say things in their constituencies which they now know to have been untrue." The next day the diary carries another note: "It meant much to me that a Prime Minister ... had told his country a series of shameful lies."

What exactly is referred to when Eden is thus spoken of as having "lied"? The answer may be found in the minutes of a meeting of the 1922 Committee (a group of Conservative Members of the House of Commons) which took place on December 18, 1956. Eden addressed those present, and ended his speech with these words: "As long as I live, I shall never apologise for what we did." Then Nigel Nicolson spoke, as one of those "who were disloyal to the Prime Minister". He said that the Egyptian operation had been not only inexpedient but wrong in principle. "It was undertaken in such a way as to force honourable men, including the Prime Minister himself, to make use of ... arguments which were in themselves dishonourable. I have been shocked by the series of half-truths which we have been obliged to tell to justify our action."

The younger Nicolson continued: "I needn't specify them because they are nearly all familiar. Iremonger raised one

of them just now—the charge of collusion. Why did the Prime Minister not give him a more direct denial? Then there is the difference between the French and the British explanations of why we did not tell the Americans. And the legend that we have ‘helped the UN’. Let me add a fourth. What did the Prime Minister mean when he said just now that ‘we did everything we could by warning’ to stop the Israel-Arab war? Whom did we warn of what?... This is the sort of thing I mean by ‘half-truths’.”

Eden replied to the accusations. “Of course,” he said, “there was something unpleasant about our action. Surely you don’t imagine that M. Mollet and I enjoyed going behind the back of the Americans and the United Nations? But what was the alternative?... I can understand what Mr. Nicolson means by ‘half-truths’. Some—and if they existed at all, they were not serious or many in number—were necessary, and always are, in this sort of operations.” Thus was the Prime Minister of Great Britain, and leader of the Conservative Party, obliged to admit officially the lying and deceit he had employed during the Suez crisis.

How could the Tory Party continue, after this, to accept as its guiding light a man who had been obliged, as Eden had, to admit to dishonourable conduct? After this, how could the electorate trust the Conservatives and give them their votes? The upper echelons of the party knew they could not, and this led to sharp internal friction and strife.

The accusation laid at Eden’s door was not that he had failed. Anyone in politics can suffer a failure. The Prime Minister stood accused of something else: that he had guided affairs in such a way as to discredit his party and the British political system. That is why the open anti-Eden revolt started in the ranks of his own Cabinet colleagues and was then taken up in the Parliamentary group of the Conservative Party, and in the upper Civil Service (the Foreign Office especially) not after the three aggressor countries had been foiled, but immediately following the ultimatum to Egypt, which was rightly taken by all as a declaration of war. Indeed, after the cease-fire the “revolt” began to die down.

The delivery of the ultimatum to Egypt was also the moment which saw the high point of the protest movement against Eden’s policy, which had been gathering momentum for three months, taking in more and more of the general population as it progressed, and eventually sweeping with it the Labour Party and the TUC.

On October 31 the Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign Office, Anthony Nutting, resigned in protest against the policy over Suez. His example was followed by Boyle, Under-Secretary at the Exchequer. Another resignation, that of William Clark, Eden's press secretary, caused a sensation. He decided to quit Downing Street after the Conservative Chief Whip instructed him to tell the press that Nutting's resignation was not a political matter but on health grounds, which was untrue. Another reason for Clark's resignation was, in his own words, that the government tried to use confidential channels of communication with the press and the BBC for the dissemination of versions of events which were known to be incorrect.

A group of Conservative MPs was formed, some 15 strong, which came out against the policy of the Eden Government during the Suez crisis. It was headed by Alec Spearman. The members of the group wrote letters of protest to Eden.

At the Foreign Office a group of Under-Secretaries and other senior civil servants, who had devoted much time and labour to building up the "special relationship" with the USA, wrote a round robin condemning the military attack on Egypt. Gerald Fitzmaurice, legal adviser at the Foreign Office, issued a memorandum criticising the legal grounds cited for military action against Egypt. Some junior members of staff resigned. At the F.O. they were very displeased because Eden was acting without asking the advice of the diplomats. History was repeating itself: it was just the way in which Neville Chamberlain had behaved twenty years before.

Immediately after the cease-fire there was a Parliamentary debate lasting several days. Many hard things were said, but the debate was not, in the last resort, really any great threat to the Eden Government. Conservative Members rallied round fairly unitedly to defend the government's actions. The theme-song of their defence was the old, well-worn refrain of "the Soviet threat". It was familiar, and pleasing, to right-wing Labour as well as Conservative ears. "On 8 November," writes Macmillan, "Peter Thorneycroft, President of the Board of Trade, made a great impression by his robust defence of the Government's position. He boldly declared that the plans of the Russian Government had included a take-over of the Middle East... The Anglo-French intervention had stopped this." As usual in such cases, no proof of the allegations was provided. And there could be no such proof.

The Parliamentary finale to the Suez affair went off, on the whole, quite well for Eden. No one moved a vote of no confidence in the government. In the vote on a motion approving the government's actions, only 15 Conservative Members (some sources say only eight) abstained. Two conclusions can be drawn from this. Firstly, that the overwhelming majority of the Conservative Party were behind Eden's Suez policy, even after military intervention had ended in disaster. Secondly, that there were no formal grounds at that stage, as it appeared, for Eden's resignation.

On the surface all was calm, or as calm as it could be under the circumstances. But deep down processes were in motion which led inevitably to Eden's departure. In leading Conservative circles there was discussion, kept very secret, of what should be his fate. He himself was of course aware of it and on November 23, citing the recommendations of his medical advisers, he went off to Jamaica for a holiday. A rest would certainly do him no harm, but even more important, he could wait to see, and think over at leisure, what would happen next.

Anthony and Clarissa Eden spent their holiday at a villa lent them by a friend. During the Prime Minister's absence, Cabinet meetings were chaired by R. A. Butler, Minister without Portfolio. Eden was given full information by wire of the government's activities, and sanctioned its decisions.

But it was not possible to spend too long under the sun (pleasantly warm at that time of year) and the blue skies of Jamaica. On December 14, 1956, Eden returned to London hale and hearty, well-rested and in fighting spirit, which hardly seemed to foreshadow resignation in the near future.

But symptoms soon appeared which made it clear that Eden's affairs were not in too good a state. On December 18 there was a meeting of the 1922 Committee. It showed that Conservatives did not condemn the use of force against Arabs on principle, but that they were indignant over the way in which the government had gone about it. The idea was all very well, but its execution had been faulty and had done Britain no good.

It is worthy of note that Hugh Thomas, commenting on this meeting of the 1922 Committee, concludes that in the upshot of the discussion those present—or some of them at least—were left feeling that "Eden was no longer able to carry out the business of being Prime Minister".

Matters were made more difficult by the fact that dis-

satisfaction with the head of government had been brewing for quite some time. Randolph Churchill remarks that even if there had been no Suez crisis he would not have long endured as Prime Minister. "Well before the Suez crisis many of his colleagues were beginning to doubt whether he had the firmness of mind, the moral stamina, the breadth of vision essential to a British Prime Minister in these ... years."

A part in this was also played, of course, by the ambitions of those lining up for office, the top rank of the Conservative Party. Whatever the politicians concerned may say or write, however much they swear they were guided only by thoughts of their country's good, it is clear that they did not intend to miss the opportunity, presented to them by the failure of Eden's Middle Eastern policy, of getting rid of him as Prime Minister. Thomas asserts that "personal hatreds seem to have played a major part in events", i.e. in the change of Premier. "Neither Butler nor Macmillan," he says, "admired Eden; the latter found him too feminine, the former too unintellectual."

There were, at the time, only these two serious contenders for the post of Premier. It is interesting that Macmillan was an enthusiastic supporter of the attack on Egypt, while Butler was to start with a rather lukewarm supporter, and by the end an open opponent of the Suez venture. One might think that that would give Butler the advantage—he had been against the policy which had just proved bankrupt. But British Conservatives follow a logic all their own...

When it became clear to Eden that the Tory leaders had reached an unwritten decision that he was to be removed, he did his best to stage-manage his own departure as decently as possible. His past medical history made it quite possible to do this. That way out suited him and his party equally well. The medical men, of course, did what was necessary.

On January 8, 1957, Eden and his wife went on an unofficial visit to the Queen at Sandringham (one of her out-of-town residences). Here Eden informed Elizabeth II that he would have to resign. The Queen promised to go up to London the next day in order to receive his official resignation, which had to be made at Buckingham Palace.

On January 9 Eden summoned his Cabinet colleagues together and told them that the doctors advised him to resign. Neither he nor Macmillan say anything to suggest that anyone made any objection. Only regrets were expressed—as politeness dictates.

When the Cabinet meeting was over, Eden left, and after him Butler and Macmillan. The Marquess of Salisbury, who was Lord President of the Council, and Lord Kilmuir, the Lord Chancellor, took the initiative as senior Ministers and called in the members of government, one by one, and spoke with each on who should succeed Eden. The overwhelming majority of government Ministers, and later of Members of Parliament, were in favour of Macmillan. Eden was by this time making his resignation to the Queen.

Officially the Queen did not know the result of the enquiries made by Salisbury and Kilmuir. So the situation was that she had the right, under the Constitution, to entrust the formation of a government to any representative of the majority Party in the Commons. This is a situation which only rarely arises in British political life.

The following day the Queen summoned Sir Winston Churchill and the Marquess of Salisbury and asked their advice. They gave Macmillan as their choice. So at 2 o'clock in the afternoon of January 10 Harold Macmillan was summoned to Buckingham Palace, and emerged vested with the powers of Prime Minister of Great Britain.

Macmillan was expected to mend the fences Eden had broken, and to guide the ship of state with greater caution. As Randolph Churchill writes in the foreword to his book on Eden: "Britain's situation in the world today is on the decline. This process can only be arrested if we brush all false sentimentality aside and try to see the harsh facts of life as they are, with no distortion of class or party." Sage advice, but it asks for the impossible. British statesmen cannot, even if they wished to, abstract themselves in what they do from all considerations of party and class interest. Nor could Macmillan do so.

Like his predecessors, Harold Macmillan was incapable of realising that the revolutionary changes taking place in the contemporary world are irreversible, and that British policy must therefore of necessity go on suffering one defeat after another unless it takes these factors into account. This is the source of the lack of success for British policies which is to be observed during the terms in office of all the Conservative Prime Ministers who have followed after Sir Anthony Eden.

After his resignation Eden went to Chequers for a few days. Then he took up an invitation from Sidney Holland, the Prime Minister of New Zealand, to go and spend the

English winter months in that distant, tranquil and beautiful country. It was a long way to go. On January 18 the steamer with Eden and his wife on board left Tilbury Docks. Their friends went down to see them off. Someone from the French Embassy brought a bouquet of roses, with the compliments of his government. The steamer moved slowly down the Thames to the North Sea, and was soon hidden in the cold mists of winter.

The political career of Anthony Eden was at an end.

Epilogue

Any activity can give rise to mistakes. The only human being who makes no mistakes is the one who does nothing. But Eden's political bankruptcy was not just the result of mistakes made in the second half of 1956.

One could say Eden was the victim of confrontation: the millstones of the world confrontation between socialism and capitalism crushed this eminent politician whose luck finally ran out. And that would be true, in a way.

One can suppose that Eden's bankruptcy is to be explained by the crisis of British imperialism, which is less and less able to command the power to outface its opponents. That interpretation too would be true enough.

These are the objective factors which set the full stop at the end of Eden's political career.

But there is the subjective side to be considered as well. And this has its roots in the deep-seated and serious malady which not only afflicted Eden, but has affected and still affects the ruling circles of Britain. The main feature of this malady is the inability to formulate and carry out a realistic policy.

There was a time—roughly one hundred years ago—when Britain was the most powerful commercial and industrial nation there was, and by virtue of that fact played the leading part in world politics. But that time is long since past, the balance of power in the world has changed radically, and Britain no longer has the economic or the military might to dominate the world. The material conditions for that former domination have been swept away by the revolutionary processes taking place in the 20th century, and by the unevenness of development of the states within the capitalist system.

Yet the statesmen of Britain, particularly those belonging to the Conservative Party, still try to act as though the world of today is the same as it was a hundred years ago.

The result of this massive time-lag between the political thinking of British ruling circles and the real possibilities open to their state can be seen in the numerous fiascos—they have almost become a rule—suffered by Britain's foreign policy.

If one discards the rainbow-tinted propaganda camouflage of British policy (every politician does his best, in his own interests, to present even his obvious failures as successes), and assesses the results of this policy objectively, i.e. by the degree to which it achieved or was unable to achieve its aims, then one cannot help but reach the conclusion that British policy on all major issues has been a failure. Bourgeois Britain and its allies tried to halt the advance of the human race along the road of socialism—and was unable to do so. She tried to destroy the movement for national liberation and preserve her colonial empire—and suffered hopeless defeat. Bourgeois Britain still carries on the age-long struggle for dominant position in Europe, but throughout the 20th century she has suffered one defeat after another in that struggle, and is now further away from her goal than ever before. This is the direct result of the country's governments having set themselves—and of their still setting themselves—clearly unrealistic aims.

Having noted that important aspect of British foreign policy, it would be wrong not to give due weight to the real possibilities open to contemporary Britain in the sphere of international relations. In a message sent by the head of the Soviet Government to the British Prime Minister in April 1957, there is this passage: "We are not inclined to belittle, as it has become fashionable to do in some quarters recently, the role which Great Britain continues to play in the international arena as a great industrial, commercial and naval power. Soviet people cherish feelings of deep respect for the courageous and industrious people of your country, which has enriched the human race by impressive examples of what man's labour, practised over centuries, can produce, as well as by remarkable discoveries and achievements in the fields of science, technology, literature and art."

But Eden and his colleagues, and the whole Conservative Party, were still in a world of delusions, dreaming of a renaissance of Britain's former imperial greatness. Yearnings for "the good old days" of empire were to be found in right-wing Labour breasts also.

Underlying this British attitude to the rest of the world, though, are not idealistic motives, but entirely material class interest. The ruling classes long to bring back the conditions under which their interests were best served.

André Maurois, biographer of many notable figures in world history and culture, once remarked: "Man does not wield power, power wields the man." There is undoubtedly a rational kernel in that. Eden's actions were determined by the interests and the psychology of those who wield power in Britain. He belonged to those circles himself, he shared their delusions and their prejudices, and he acted in their interests.

The apologists of British Conservatism assert that the Eden of the thirties was quite different to the Eden of 1956, that the Suez "failure" was an exception in his political biography. In thus white-washing Eden, they are also doing their best to defend the reputation of the Conservative Party.

Certainly people change very considerably, in the course of their lives. Eden too changed, under the influence of time, events and new conditions.

But he was distinguished by great consistency in adhering to his basic convictions and principles, those which formed and defined his political position. It was a class position, and Eden was faithful to it throughout the whole of his political career. He was always seeking to further British dominance in international relations, he always acted to preserve colonialism, and hence to oppose the national liberation movement; he never laid down his arms in the fight against socialism, either within Britain or outside it. In this sense there is no basic difference between Eden in, say, 1936, and Eden in 1956.

It is taken as generally accepted that in 1956 Eden did not show enough of the will-power and determination required of a British Prime Minister. And indeed the Suez war confirmed an old truth: a weak personality may be able to lead a government successfully in "normal" times, but in crisis such a leader will inevitably be thrown overboard, and will bring great troubles upon his country.

Was it known in 1955 that Eden was a good second fiddle in government, but had not the qualities needed for successfully playing the leading part? Yes, it was known. Why then did the ruling circles hand him power in April 1955? The usual answer given to this question in Britain falls into two parts. Firstly, there was no one stronger than Eden available among top Conservatives at the time. Macmillan and Butler

were both men of much the same calibre. Secondly, back in 1942 Churchill had officially proclaimed Eden as his successor. Churchill gave his recommendation of Eden to George VI, but it was the latter's daughter Elizabeth II who was to act upon it. It was his position as "heir apparent" that gave Eden the advantage over Macmillan and Butler. It is hard to say why Churchill made the choice he did—and he stuck to it for 13 years; perhaps he really was sure that there was no one to hand in the party who would be stronger than Eden; perhaps it was an example of a tendency which can be noted quite often among bourgeois leaders—to keep close to them and train up as their successors men of lesser scope and ability than themselves. Whichever it was, it is Churchill who must bear some of the responsibility for what was done by Eden.

Biographers like to compare Eden and Churchill. It seems likely that given the same conditions, Churchill would have made the same miscalculation as Eden, i.e. he too would have tried to use force to restore British "rights" in the Middle East. But he would have found a way of his own out of the *impasse*; the greater strength and individuality of his character, his political flexibility and ability to manoeuvre would have come to the fore then. Churchill was a dour fighter; several times he succeeded in extricating himself from an apparently hopeless position. In 1915, as First Lord of the Admiralty, he initiated the Dardanelles operation. It was a terrible disaster, and Churchill was dismissed. Soon he was made a Minister once more, though. This time defeat awaited him over the intervention against Soviet Russia. That cost him his ministerial portfolio and his seat in the House of Commons. But in 1924 there is Churchill in the Cabinet again. In the thirties too major failures beset him. But when the Second World War began and men of true ability were needed, Churchill was up in the saddle again, and once up he stayed there longer than ever before.

Eden was quite another matter. For him, whose personality had not enough force in it, the first failure was the last—the end of his political career once and for all.

There were other differences between them. Churchill was a man of talent in many directions. When he was out of office, he wrote books. He had definite literary gifts, and their exercise earned him in the end a considerable financial reward, and great popularity. He was a keen painter, and had considerable talent in that field too. On each successive

occasion when he found himself ejected from government, life did not stop for Churchill, it just moved on to another stage.

Eden had no fiery feelings and multifarious interests. He never in his life took any action dictated by strong feeling rather than by reason. He scarcely had any real friends. For Eden everything was concentrated in his career, everything was subordinated to the climb upwards. So, as his career had been the essence and meaning of his life, when that ended he had little left.

Not that the ex-Premier was forgotten by those whom he had served so faithfully for so many years. Although the Conservative Party had made him the scapegoat after the disaster of 1956, Eden was none the less generously rewarded. He became Earl of Avon.

When he returned from his holiday in New Zealand, in the spring of 1957, the retired Premier began to write his Memoirs. He was allowed full access to government papers for this purpose. Eden was in a hurry to justify himself to his contemporaries and before history, so he began at the end rather than the beginning.

In 1959 one fat volume was completed, and published under the title *Full Circle*. It deals with its writer's activities from October 1951 to January 18, 1957. This was the period which started with Eden becoming Foreign Secretary for the last time and ended with him ceasing to be Prime Minister. After this first volume the others followed a more normal chronological pattern. In 1962 he finished work on the volume entitled *Facing the Dictators*, which covered events from 1923 to February 1938, the last month being that in which Eden resigned from the Chamberlain Government.

The third volume was called *The Reckoning*, and was completed in 1964. It dealt with the eve of the Second World War, and the war itself.

Twelve years later, in 1976, one more volume appeared, the last one, which its author called *Another World: 1897-1917*. Eden in it recalls his childhood in the Edwardian era, but contrives to tell the reader very little about himself or about what went on in his family. He was true to himself till the end, and kept his inner world a sealed book.

Memoirs are a very popular genre. Readers turn to memoirs in hopes of finding there more specific, humanly detailed material than there would be in, say, works of his-

torical research—something that will help them to a deeper appreciation of the truth. But as a rule the reader gets less than he expects.

Political memoirs have a wide currency, but they often take the reader away from the historical truth rather than bringing it closer to him. In general, their fault is that their authors are projecting their own *persona*, white-washing their own actions and blackening those of their opponents, dragging in all sorts of supplementary material for the purpose of justifying their government's policy, their party, their class. As a rule this is done quite deliberately, for specific political, class purposes. In 1978 the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* had an apt remark in one of its articles, which ran: "Historians, among others, expose the lies and deceptions of politicians, dead and alive."

Many awaited the publication of Eden's Memoirs with interest. And were disappointed. The writer had never been a good stylist, nature had failed to endow him with literary talent. It was noted earlier in this book that Eden's speeches showed a poverty of thought and an excess of well-worn clichés. It was the same when he wrote his Memoirs. But one more "merit" had been added. He relates and explains events in the language of diplomatic documents and speeches. This means that the sense is buried somewhere deep in a thicket of nicely-turned diplomatic formulations, and it is extremely difficult to win through to it. In the course of thirty years' work in the diplomatic field Eden had acquired and made his own for ever this mode of expounding (or concealing) his thoughts. His Memoirs are written in just this kind of language.

The reader is likely to be disappointed in another respect too. Eden was a very cautious man who tried never to offend anyone, either living or already long gone to a better world, and he skirts around all ticklish themes, telling us nothing that we did not already know, by and large, from other available literature.

A perusal of the testament of the "hero" of Suez tells us that Eden had learned nothing from history, had drawn no lessons from his own mistakes and failures. He also remained true to his own strongest political feeling—hatred of the USSR. All the troubles of Britain and the "free world" in the period after the Second World War are attributed by him to the acts of the Soviet Union. Not that there is anything original in that.

So, the Memoirs were written, and brought out by the best publishers in Britain and the United States, and brought in quite a nice little income; and with that Eden was content. He lived with Clarissa amid the beauties of nature, on his estate of Alvediston in Wiltshire. He painted water-colours, and grew flowers. Friends frequently invited the Edens to stay with them, in the Bahamas or in American resorts. He liked these trips, which brought some variety into their even lives.

Once Eden received the well-known Soviet journalist Melor Sturua at Alvediston. Naturally the conversation touched upon Eden's personal drama as being an integral part of London's Suez adventure.

Occasionally Eden would go up to London, sometimes he would give signs of life by granting an interview to a British or American journalist, or by publishing an article. In one of these he warned his readers, and the leaders of the Western world, against contemplating peaceful coexistence with the Soviet Union. In another, he took up the cudgels against detente, the establishment of a stable peace, the creation of a system of collective security and cooperation in Europe.

In January 1977 Eden was taking a holiday in Florida, USA, at the villa of the well-known millionaire and diplomat (during the Second World War), Averell Harriman. A year previously Eden had been found to be suffering from cancer of the liver. Now he realised that he was in a bad way. The doctors judged his state to be critical. The British Government sent a military plane to bring him back to Britain. In his home at Alvediston, Anthony Eden died in his sleep, at the age of 79. Twenty years had passed since he resigned as Prime Minister.

Anthony Eden was buried quietly, without fuss, at a family ceremony with only relatives and close friends present, there at Alvediston. The title of Lord Avon was inherited by his son Nicholas. He had not followed in his father's footsteps, but became a "commercial banker".

The British and the American press responded to Eden's death by printing calm, not over-extensive obituaries, though *The New York Times* went so far as to devote a whole column to the deceased's life and work. It is an interesting point that the American publications spoke more warmly of Eden than did the British. Nothing new emerged in the press on the high points of Eden's life—his attitude to "ap-

peasement", his resignation from the Chamberlain Government, his part in the Suez war of 1956. No one numbered Eden among the outstanding statesmen, but all noted his great merits as a diplomat and a masterly negotiator. It was the British weekly *The Economist* which produced the most serious and profound assessment of Eden. "Anthony Eden died last Friday, at a time when historians can already begin to understand him," it said on January 22, 1977. And the journal itself made a very good attempt at a brief summing-up calling him the man "who arrived after his time". And just to make the point perfectly plain, *The Economist* headed its article "At Empire's End". And it is the truth that Anthony Eden was a diplomat and politician who pursued the aims and used the methods characteristic of British imperialism in the time of the British Empire's might and power. But in the mid-fifties that was all in the past.

Reading this present book, some may feel inclined to reproach its author for harsh treatment of his hero. But there you are, the assessments made in this book are based on precise facts, not on Eden's words but on his deeds. At least such was the author's intention.

In his monograph, V. Trukhanovsky, Corresponding Member of the USSR Academy of Sciences and a specialist on contemporary British history, presents a political biography of the famous British diplomat, Foreign Minister and Prime Minister, Anthony Eden, who played an important role in British foreign policy from the 1930s to the 1950s.

This political portrait of Anthony Eden also serves to illustrate Anglo-Soviet, Anglo-American and Anglo-European relations, particularly in the immediate pre-war years.

The author devotes specific attention to Eden's political activity during the creation of the anti-Hitler coalition and in the post-war period.

This book represents a notable contribution to the elaboration of the history of international relations, and will be of interest to the wide readership.